

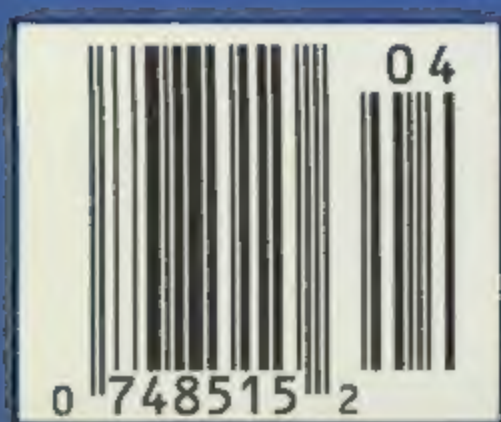
Unmasking the Passive-Aggressive Man

# Esquire

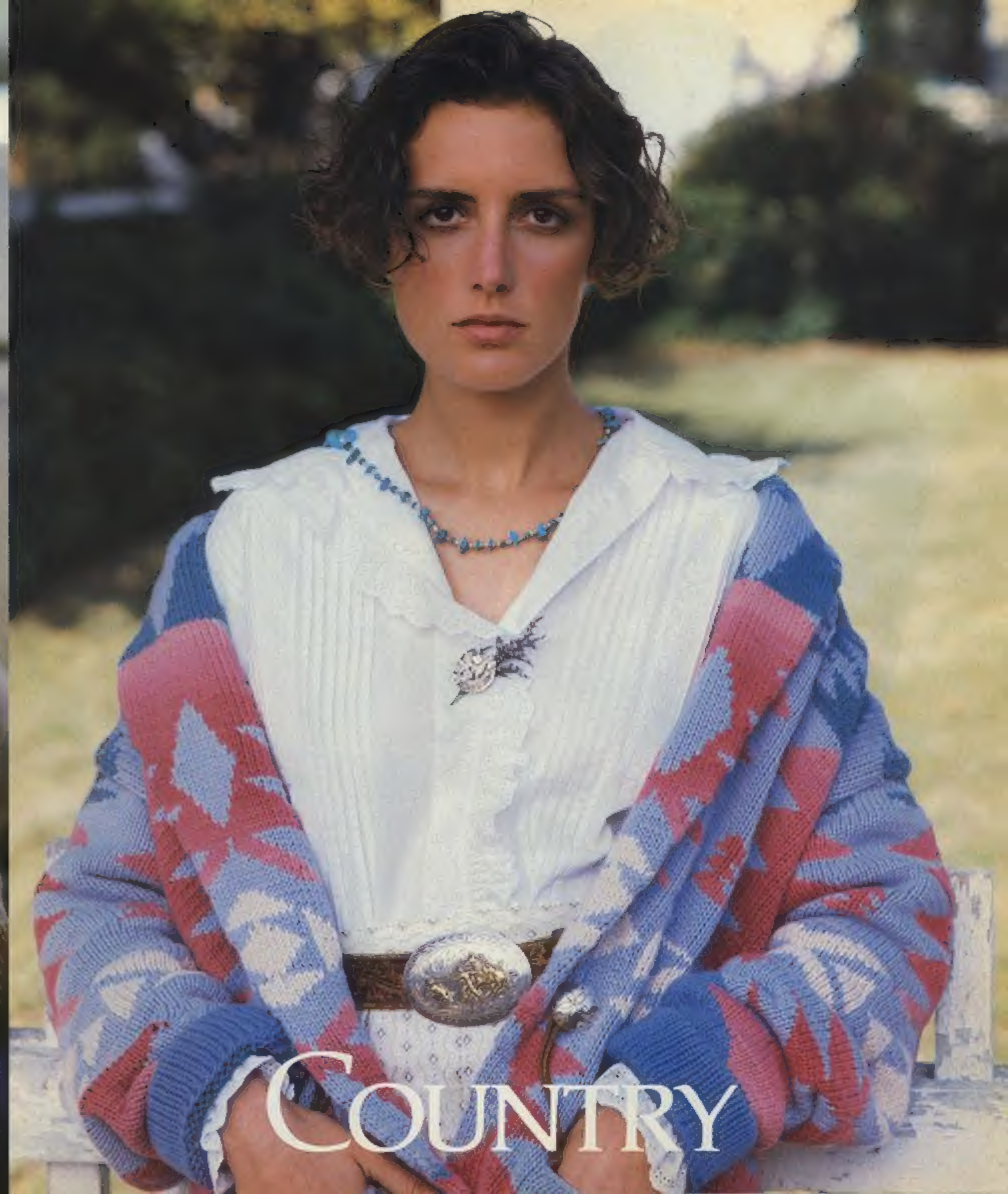
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APRIL 1989

## DEPARTMENTS

26  
THE SOUND  
AND THE FURY  
**Letters from Readers**

31  
BACKSTAGE  
**The Sounds of Spring**  
By Lee Eisenberg

59  
AMERICAN BEAT  
**Nature Boy**  
By Bob Greene

67  
THE SPORTING LIFE  
**Simply Darling**  
By Mike Lupica

77  
ACTIVE HEALTH  
**What's the Buzz?**  
By John Poppy

98  
MAN POWER  
**Portraits of Ideas  
in Progress**  
Harvey Rosenfield,  
Marc Chiat,  
Stephen Schneider,  
James Billington

142  
WOMEN WE LOVE  
**Elizabeth Perkins**  
By John Guare  
Photographs by Lance  
Staedler

177  
ESQUIRE  
RECOMMENDS  
**Deconstructionism**  
Photograph by George Hurrell

192  
ADVERSARIA  
**The Commentator as  
Junk Food**  
By Steve Brodner

# Esquire

## FEATURES

105  
ESQUIRE  
**The Passive-Aggressive Male**  
Who he is, how he got that way, and what he can do about it.  
By Lisa Grunwald

116  
PROFILE  
**The Light in August**  
August Wilson turns his politics into art and his history into exaltation.  
By Chip Brown

130  
ESQUIRE EYE  
**The Game**  
A photographic tribute to the pastime of a lifetime.  
By Lee Eisenberg  
Photographs by Kurt Markus

145  
TRAVEL  
**The Houses of a French Summer**  
What's better than a month in the country? Four months, each perfect.  
By James Salter

154  
ESSAY  
**A Literary Friendship**  
Recalling James Jones and *From Here to Eternity*.  
By William Styron

166  
FASHION  
**In the Adirondack Tradition**  
Classics as crisp and natural as a mountain breeze.  
Photographs by Kurt Markus

178  
FICTION  
**The Last Generation**  
After his mother's death, Tommy settled in to wait for the end of the world.  
By Joy Williams

Cover: Photograph by Kurt Markus

VOLUME 111 NO. 4

## 39 MAN AT HIS BEST

LIVING QUARTERS  
**Floors Like Ike Liked**  
By Phil Patton

REAL MUSIC  
**Oh Mandy**  
By Daniel Okrent

THE ENLIGHTENED  
TRAVELER  
**Jazz by the River**  
By Peter Nelson

CLASSICS  
**Knickers**  
By John Berendt

THE SEASONED COOK  
**A Sworded Affair**  
By A. J. McClane

PRACTICAL MATTERS  
**Mid-life Sax**  
By Joseph Nocera


83  
**SMART MONEY**  
THE INVESTOR  
**Till Death Does Its Part**  
By Donald R. Katz

THE BUSINESS  
TRAVELER  
**If He'd Meant Them to  
Fly...**  
By Glenn Eichler

INSURANCE  
**The Prospects for  
Single Life in  
the 1990s**

THE STRATEGIST  
**Having a Nice Day**  
By Stanley Bing





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# The Sound and the Fury

## LETTERS

### The Beef Goes On

Gee whiz! I've blown it again. Here I've been liking Bruce Springsteen ("St. Boss," by John Lombardi, December 1988, for several years without ever questioning whether he was "new hip," "old hip," nitty gritty, fake, real, true to his roots, untrue to his roots, true to someone else's roots, good in bed, fat, slim, or allergic to cats. What is this horse pucky?

Ardis Evans  
Cloverdale, Calif.

"St. Boss." I'd give it a 60, too long, no beat, and you can't dance to it.

Ronald A. Schechter  
Takoma Park, Md

Lombardi's simplistic statement that Springsteen's music is about conforming, not rebelling, completely overlooks the emptiness

and resignation that dominate the lives of a working class that has been co-opted by the commodity-fetishizing mall culture of the "runaway American Dream," while this same working class lacks the cultural and spiritual values of the middle class that created the mall culture. If Bruce's music is about "conforming," then it is more particularly about the spiritual and intellectual devastation of conforming to a lifestyle that is both incomprehensible and empty.

Julia Grella  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

It really must be said: your Bruce Springsteen trashing was the print-journalism equivalent of the Gera-do Rivera-sponsored Roy Innis-versus-Skinhead setup. It was designed to promote ratings (readership) without any

concern for honesty, facts, or taste.

Arthur Barton  
San Francisco, Calif

Until we discard the pandering hero worship that equates rock stars with saints, we'll be a nation of slaves to hypesters, too-obscure hotel designers, the prematurely wealthy—the unnaturally and unnecessarily clever arbiters of what is allowable. Your piece on Springsteen was writing of a high order, thought-provoking and muscular.

M. L. Marinelli  
Salem, Mass.

I commend Esquire for publishing "St. Boss," the most powerful piece of cultural commentary in a decade. John Lombardi's broken-nose lyricism was so refreshing to read at a time when bold, creative use of language

has just about vanished from the pages of mass magazines. I felt as if a blast of fresh air were sweeping aside the polluted clouds of "sales culture" consciousness. It was like reading the old Esquire again. Keep up the good work.

Michael Disend  
New York, N.Y.

### Afterlife

Tim O'Brien's poignant descriptions of encounters with the dying and the dead ("The Lives of the Dead," January) both moved and educated me. I read this beautiful piece and found myself surprised that such expressions could be made by a man. Suddenly I realized that for a long time I have seen men as another species, incapable of feeling such tenderness or regret. O'Brien's strong and sensitive reflections put the lie to that old view and gave me much hope for the com-

mon humanity of women and men.

Anne Gavin Amy  
Alexandria, Va.

I just want to tell Tim O'Brien that he has written one of the greatest short stories that I've ever read. "The Lives of the Dead" brought tears to my eyes. His skill with words compares favorably with that of the greatest writers of our time.

Sam Zipkin  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

### Junior Birdmen

Thank you, Annie Dillard and Esquire, for "The Stunt Pilot" (January). I, too, soared with Dave Rahm (if only in spirit) on numerous occasions. What's more—so much more to me—he took my then-sixteen-year-old daughter "under his wing" in 1972, after she had been captivated by his performance in the Bellingham Air Fair...and became her inspiration, her flight instructor, and her friend. Today she is a pilot for a busy regional air carrier. She and I carry warm

memories of, and gratitude for, this special man who unreservedly shared his personal gift.

Don Opperman  
Bellingham, Wash

### Bool

The Smart Money column by Stanley Bing entitled "Okay, You Scared Me!" (January) was one of the funniest things I've ever read. I thoroughly enjoyed every word. Bing is a genius.

Vivien Brownlee  
Yuba City, Calif

### Poor Show

I am appalled by a distasteful presentation of photographs in the December issue of your magazine. On the multiple-page spread entitled "One Size Fits All," you managed to capture some of the most repulsive stereotypes associated with black women: the whore, the sex fiend, the loose woman. The white women pictured (conveniently unexposed) were presented as coy, teasing, and playful. The black woman (with one bare breast and dripping wet) as-

sumed a pose suggestive of sexual abandon. Selective media images are so important because they send messages far beyond any superficial appearances. I hope that in the future you will be more careful.

Judi Moore Smith  
Executive Producer  
National Public Radio  
Washington, D.C.

### Class Notes

I was in one of the first classes that graduated from Maine North High School, which Bob Greene wrote about ("A School of One's Own," American Beat, January). As is so often the case, he opted for the cutesy and obvious approach in his writing and missed the real story—the feeling of disconnectedness that comes when you graduate from a school with so little past and virtually no future. Though my parents still live at the same address as we did then, I've never heard of any class reunion for my graduating class or any other from Maine North. And driving by and seeing such a new building

now sitting vacant and waiting to be knocked down for condos and townhouses somehow makes high school memories feel less real, less legitimate than those experienced by friends who've gone to schools in the city—those brick wonders that are so rich with history and tradition.

David Dee  
Chicago, Ill.

Future Bob Greene articles should include a disclaimer: DO NOT ATTEMPT TO READ IN A PUBLIC PLACE OR WITH STRANGERS IN CLOSE PROXIMITY. I made the unfortunate mistake of doing both with "A School of One's Own" one recent afternoon downtown, and uncontrollable laughter was the result.

Jeffrey Joplin  
Grand Prairie, Tex

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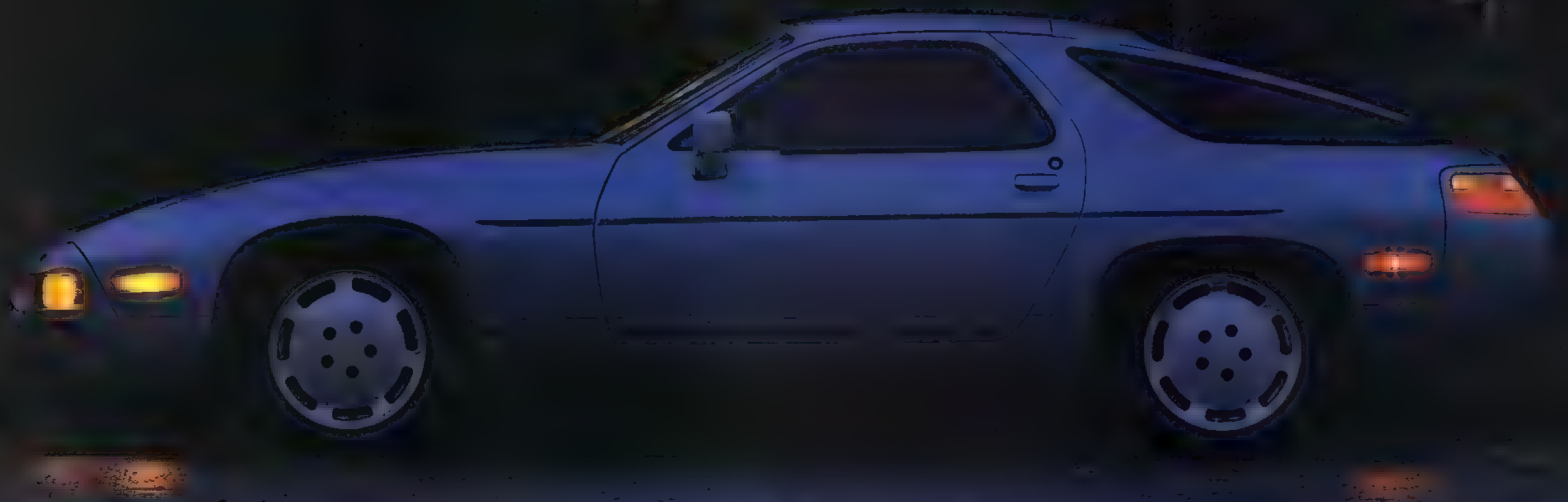


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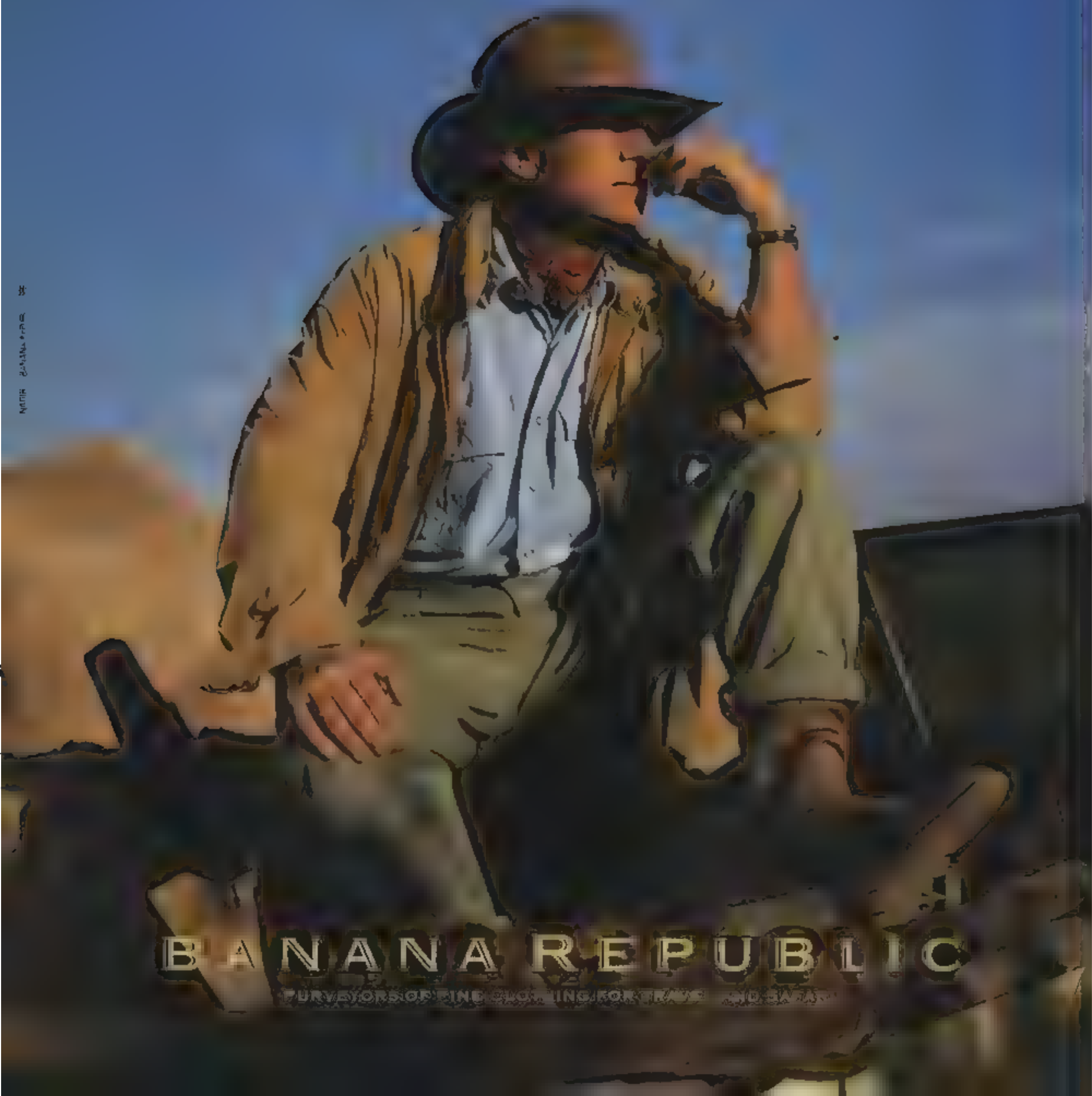
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## Backstage

# The Sounds of Spring

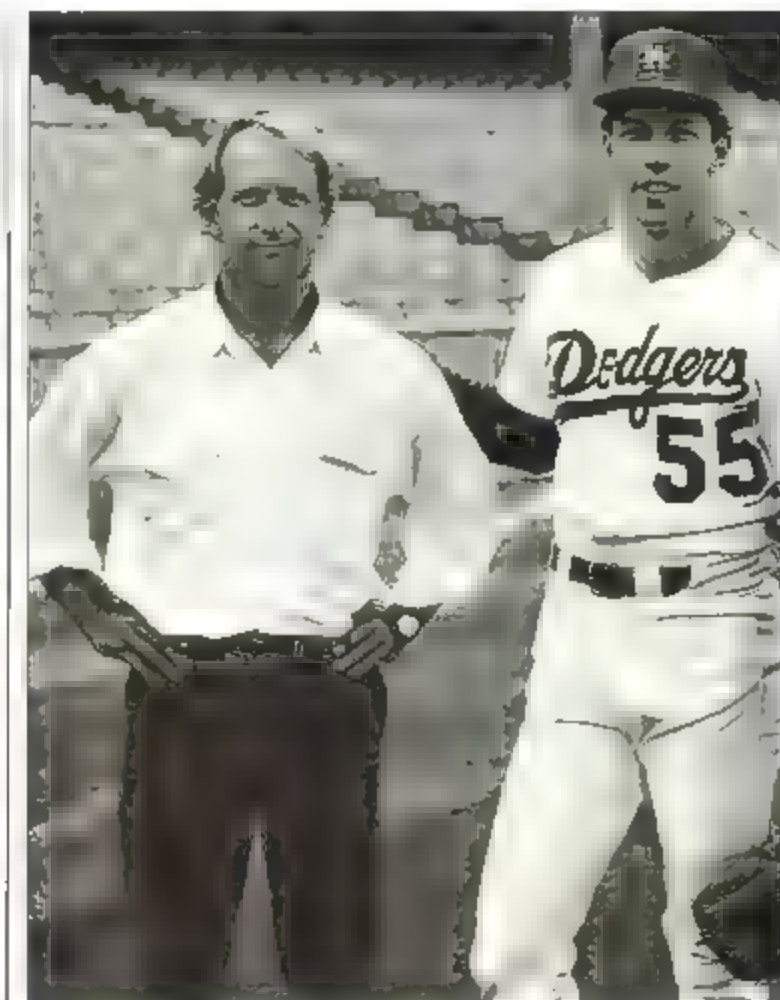
By Lee Eisenberg

**W**HILE IT IS TRUE that in the spring some men's fancies turn to thoughts of love, just about every man's fancy turns to Opening Day. Once more we have beaten back darkness and face a lusher life around the corner. Opening Day is reassuring proof that, in spite of the usual dislocations, breakups, and mortalities that visit each of our lives, a continuum exists. Later in this issue I'll try to explain what I mean, but an even better argument lies in the eleven photographs you will find, taken by Kurt Markus ("The Game," page 130).

These pictures are—and I trust Markus will take no offense—baseball cards for grown-ups. They capture the faces of our heroes, as our Topps collections did, but now the boys have a reality about them that no ordinary baseball card ever captured. These men *know* the season won't be perfect: that hitting .300 will be a struggle; that shoulders will split and hamstrings will pop; that cameras and microphones will pester their every move, save for those precious moments when they're scrubbing their armpits. Unlike our old cards, these images reveal the ages of their subjects. When we were young, the faces on the cards belonged to boys who looked how old to us? Forty? Fifty? On these "cards," Orel Hershisser looks to be what he is—a young man of thirty. Umpire Doug Harvey is an effervescent fifty-nine.

There is, in Markus's pictures, an optimism, however qualified. They are infused with sentiment, but they are not sentimental. They flatter, but they do not idealize their subjects. They are the right kind of pictures for Opening Day, and they are the right kind of pictures for the days we are living in. For all around me, when the talk is not of impending baseball, I'm hearing the crack

Lee Eisenberg is Esquire's editor in chief.



Photographer Kurt Markus and Dodger ace Orel Hershisser

of more important renewal. That unless we face the question of the public good, we will have no private good to savor. That what we are doing to the planet is obscene and must be reversed. That the fiscal mess we have put ourselves in must be countered by concrete steps. And even that the superpowers have a hope of peace that seemed inconceivable just a year ago.

Maybe these are just the sounds of another spring, but I don't think so. Suddenly, the idea of *family* is everywhere—and whether that's thanks to Poppy Bush, or the ongoing baby boomlet, or to our advancing concern with America's old is of no matter. Suddenly there is a near-consensus that the country's fragile place in the global market

needs immediate, nonpartisan attention. Suddenly too, citizens are choosing sides not by rote but by conscience. Pluralism and paradox abound. There are liberal feminists who nevertheless oppose abortion, there are conservatives who stand firm on the woman's right to choose. There are oil-patch executives who are speaking out for higher pump taxes. There are millions of Americans who say they would be willing to pay the government an extra hundred dollars if the money would be used to help the homeless. And there are men and women who haven't said a prayer since childhood who are going to church, if only to be soothed by the sound of faith.

Maybe it's all spring fever, but it's catching. ☐



# The pen is mightier than the sword and some pens are mightier than others.



Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower holding the Parker 51 pens used to sign the German surrender on May 7, 1945 at Reims, France

Parker Pens have been chosen to sign some of the most important documents of this century.

The first use of a Parker to sign a peace treaty was between the United States and Spain in Paris on December 10, 1898.

The most recent, as you may recall, was to sign the historic arms reduction agreement between the USSR and the US in Washington on December 8, 1987.

With so many pens to choose from why have so many world leaders chosen Parker?

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September 2, 1945, Gen. Douglas MacArthur and Admiral C.W. Nimitz use a Parker Duofold and a Parker 51 to sign the Japanese surrender

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January 9, 1981, Deputy Sec. of State Warren Christopher uses a Parker Roller Ball to sign the formal agreement freeing 52 US hostages from Iran.

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# Man At His Best

A GENTLEMAN'S GUIDE TO QUALITY AND STYLE

In 1910 Proust said the hell with social life, shut the door of his room, and lined the walls with cork. In 1934 FDR said the hell with parquet and had the floor of his new oval-shaped office covered in cork.

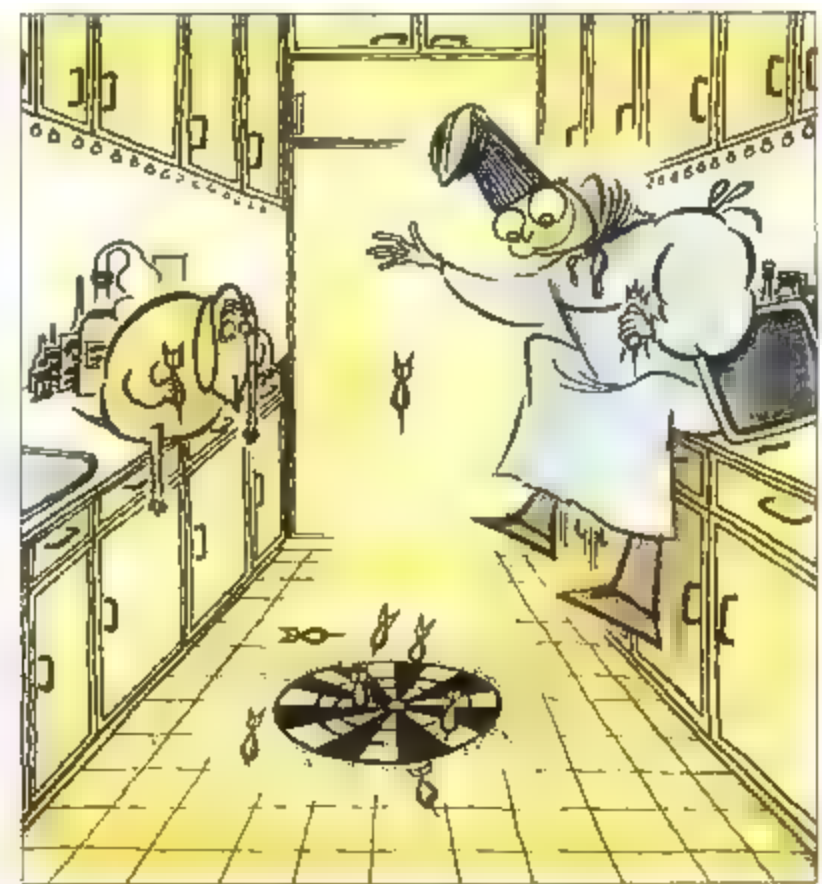
Cork, on wall and floor, has a long tradition—it speaks of pieces of hard work or hard wear, it is fairly redolent of billiard rooms in men's clubs and smoky piano bars. And having survived an interval in eclipse, thanks to the miracle of plastics for finishing and coating it.

For a while, cork slipped from view. Sure, the material had its problems: it was vulnerable to water, which made it swell, and to stains and fading in sunlight. By itself, cork was too soft. It tore up the Oval Office floor with golf shoes. But all our presidents since FDR made momentous decisions atop cork—until Nixon. He replaced it with simulated-wood vinyl. Tell me there is no moral there.

In Europe it is widely popular. French apartments are required by law to have their floors cushioned with a layer of it. The energy-conscious Japanese have lately gone in heavily for cork insulation on walls. It covers floors in Senate offices and the National Archives. You stand on cork to deliver your PAC's contribution or to contemplate the Declaration of Independence.

But nowhere is cork more needed than in the new kitchen, where the floor has failed to keep pace with appliances and counter tops.

None of the standard kitchen floors are wholly satisfactory. Quarry tile is cold to the bare, breakfast-bound foot, instantly absorbent of the slightest microsphere of spattered oil, and invariably fatal to the dropped champagne glass. Linoleum, like early television or rockabilly, has lately reappeared, but it still



LIVING QUARTERS

## Floors Like Ike Liked

BY PHIL PATTON

wears as badly as it did at Granny's. Vinyl is practical but lacks self-confidence: it tries to look like real tile or real linoleum or bad color-field painting from the 1960s.

So let me whisper one little word: Cork-o-Plast. It is a name of such unabashed artifice—surely someone in marketing was promoted—that you have to love it. I only wish they had

swapped the initial C for a K.

This stuff is made in Sweden by a firm called Wicanders, from Portuguese cork sliced, or "guillotined," as they say in the trade, into tiles and sandwiched in vinyl. The top vinyl layer is clear, tough, and cleanable, the bottom one ridged for adherence. It is a product of basic utility, improved in strength and durability in the best Scandinavian manner,

the way Volvo or Saab turbo-charges a hardy four-cylinder.

You can lay down the square Cork-o-Plast tiles, available in a number of shades, all by yourself, with a pleasing sweep of the jagged adhesive trowel. The only skill is in matching the slight

**Cork-o-Plast. It is a name of such unabashed artifice that you have to love it.**

natural-color variations that occur in any batch of the tile. There is satisfaction in deploying the squares in a pleasant progression wallward from the central cruciform. Laying instructions (*verlegeanleitung*, *instructions de pose*, *laggningsanvisning*) are provided in nine languages, some of which it is difficult to imagine people actually using to discuss cork. In this country the distributor is Expanko Cork Co. of West Chester, Pennsylvania, which sees to it that Cork-o-Plast is to be found in most premium flooring retailers.

And Cork-o-Plast is eco-responsible. No strategically vulnerable, nonreplenishable raw materials here. It provides excellent thermal and acoustic insulation. Cork is the bark layer of certain European oak trees, species *Quercus suber*, which grow mostly in Portugal and Spain. From these century-old trees, harvesters strip the cork as simply as a sheep is sheared to make a sweater.

But being natural, cork is also susceptible to the vagaries of the "harvest." The cork oaks can be robbed, like beehives, only at appropriate intervals. The intervals are a cicadalike seven to nine years. Folks in Iberian stili have patience. Supplies can dwindle—last year, for instance, pro-

EDITED BY ANITA LECLERC



vided a bad harvest—so prices remain high for such an unassuming substance.

By combining cork with vinyl, Cork-o-Plast sums up the situation of home aesthetics right now, our affection for the natural—country-blond knotty pine—balanced by our affection for the technological—red microwave ovens and black coffee-makers. It sets organic and inorganic, real and fake, in proper relationship: cool petroculture frames warm silvaculture.

It is part of the charm of Cork-o-Plast that, with its protective layer of vinyl, it is occasionally mistaken for imitation cork, as silk these days is sometimes mistaken for rayon, and real marble for faux. But look closely and you will see that all the virtues of cork are here without the failings: Cork fairly radiates hominess and warmth. It is almost crystalline in structure: fourteen-sided cells bunched together, its compact and granular texture suggests a bowl of brown sugar or a pouch of roll your-own tobacco.

It is a substance capable of instantly awakening memory: cork makes you think first, of course, of the decanting of a wine bottle, and a wafted sample of bouquet powerful enough to elicit an entire vintage. No wonder Proust

**The texture  
suggests a bowl  
of brown  
sugar or a pouch  
of tobacco.**

felt happy with cork.

But cork also lives at the center of every baseball, in the fishing float at the bass pond, and in the handle of the deep-sea casting rod. It is a sort of khaki of a material, bearing memories of the floors of old-timey gymnasiums and the walls of war rooms covered with maps and round colored pins. No wonder commanders in chief felt happy with cork. **E**



REAL MUSIC

## Oh Mandy

BY DANIEL OKRENT

I know of no musical career more frustrating than Mandy Patinkin's. The greatest singer of theater music that we have, he has impeccable phrasing, his diction nearly supernatural, his shining tenor an instrument of absolute purity. The frustration resides in Patinkin's skills as an actor, which have led him to expend great chunks of time and effort on nonsinging roles in movies (*Ragtime*, *Yentl*, *The Princess Bride*, *Daniel*) and on stage (*Trelawny of the Wells*, *Henry IV*). You see his utterly winning performance as the Spanish sword fighter Inigo Montoya in *The Princess Bride* and you realize that Patinkin is like Michael Jordan—when you watch him score, it's easy to ignore how great a defensive player he is. Watch Patinkin act, and it's too easy to forget how brilliantly he sings.

Of course, those very skills as an actor help make Patinkin a great singer. In his scant five-plus

minutes on the Kiri Te Kanawa recording of *South Pacific*, he blows away such formidable voices as Sarah Vaughan, tenor José Carreras, and Te Kanawa herself primarily because he achieves the all-but-unachievable, turning Oscar Hammerstein's cloying lyrics into words.

Evidence? There hasn't been much. Lieutenant Cable's two songs in *South Pacific*, the forgettable tunes from *Evita*, the uncharacteristically overmanicured Sondheim numbers from Patinkin's title role in *Sunday in the Park with George*. Until now, the only available recordings of top-level Patinkin singing top-level material have been the comic "Buddy's Blues" and the caustic "The Right Girl" from the Lincoln Center concert production of *Follies*.

But the release of *Mandy Patinkin* (CBS Records) sets things right. The twenty-four songs on this album, some given full treatment and others spliced into the-

matic medleys, make a case not only for Patinkin himself but for nearly every style audible in the broad panorama of American theater music. He reaches back to vaudeville ("And the Band Played On," sung as a lament), and he summons the best recent Sondheim (two numbers from "Into the Woods," including the exquisite "No One Is Alone"). He is unabashedly romantic (the Strouse-Adams "Once Upon a Time") and he is slyly parodic ("Puttin' on the Ritz"). He shouts ("Handful of Keys"), he whispers ("Over the Rainbow," complete with its rarely heard verse), he cuts up ("Coffee in a Cardboard Cup"). Patinkin finds the hidden gold in trite songs ("I'll Be Seeing You") and the essential oils in problematic ones: no one has ever done more with the impossibly difficult "Soliloquy" from *Carousel*, rendered here with an expressive range that only an exceptional actor could possibly attain.

Patinkin's extraordinary versatility comes, I think, from the one quality he seems to lack: a superego. He places no filter over his id, letting every possible character trait—cynicism, playfulness, near blinding intensity, eruptive sentimentality—pour out of his work. One song on the new album (Jolson's repellently

**His extraordinary  
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moist "Sonny Boy," which Patinkin sings a cappella) is delivered with such shameless tear-mongering that you may want to kick in your speakers.

But who could be cruel to something as sweet-sounding as the Vienna Boys Choir, as sentimental as a Whitman Sampler, and as tender as your own mother? Not only can Mandy Patinkin sing, he knows how to deliver a sucker punch too. **E**



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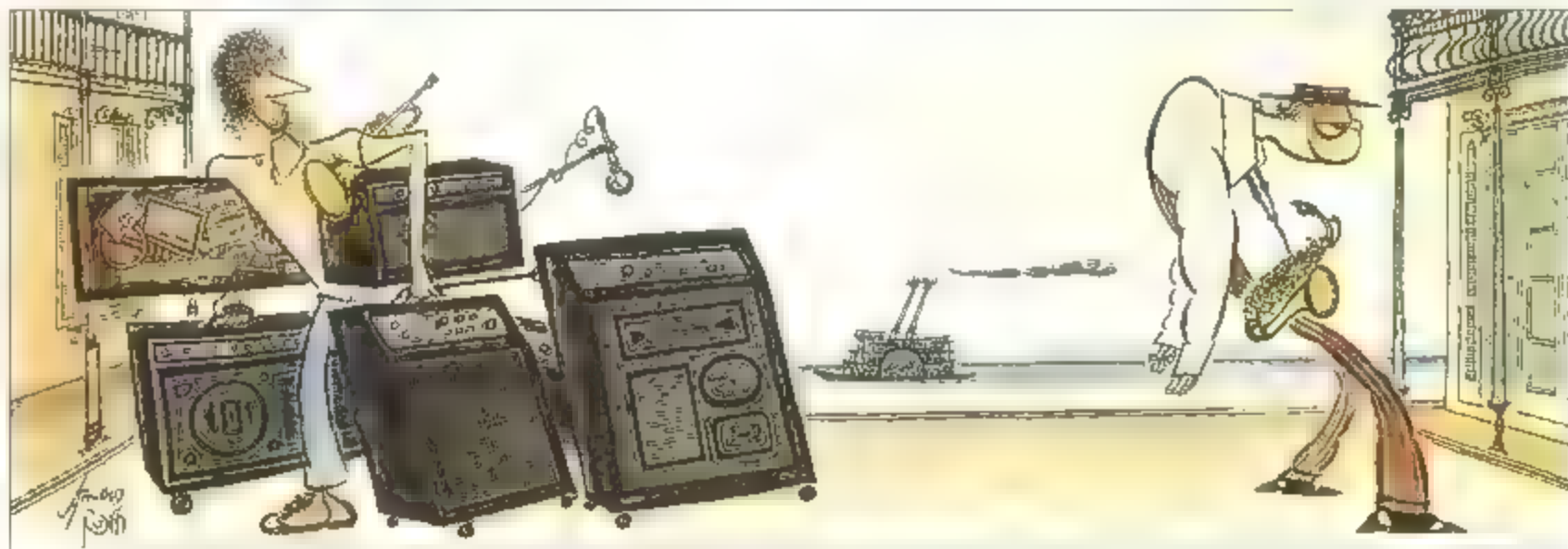
**REVLON**



IT TAKES 500 HAIRS TO COVER  
AN INCH OF SCALP. WHAT DO YOU DO  
IF YOU ONLY HAVE 200?



## Man At His Best



**N**ew Orleans, says novelist Vance Bourjaily, is "an aging courtesan, selling off her party clothes an item at a time." Mardi Gras is the bash everybody knows about, almost an obligatory do she throws for the tourists. The locals lock their windows and bar their doors. But once a year she does one for herself, lifts her hem and dances at the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, held out at the Fair Ground Race Track at the end of April, the best time to really pay her a call.

For years it's been a not-very-well-kept secret among music lovers that this is *the* festival, more a ritual you make a pilgrimage to than any event you pay money to witness. The pilgrims are other musicians, music-magazine editors, and just people who have songs stuck in their heads and blues bands playing in their souls, coming from all over the country in planes, trains, and automobiles, logging more miles to follow their passions than any group of music lovers except Dead Heads.

"Festival" covers two weekends, six days during which ten stages or tents are occupied from 11:00 in the morning until 7:00 at night by between five and ten bands each, a feast of some four hundred acts offering a musical menu of gospel, blues, rock, R&B, reggae, zydeco, bluegrass, salsa, country, trad' jazz, contemporary jazz, fusion, even a lit-

THE ENLIGHTENED TRAVELER

## Jazz by the River

BY PETER NELSON

tle pop. Sounds overlap between staging areas, effecting a sonorous cacophony that would make Charles Ives think he'd died and gone to heaven if he hadn't already.

You can stand in the middle, amid the crafts tents and food booths, and feel like the kid crying in the candy store, paralyzed by too much choice. Here Rusty Kershaw (Doug's brother) picks a Cajun guitar. There Lazy Lester (Leslie Johnson) blows sleepy, smiling blues on harmonica. In one tent, the Young Tuxedo Brass Band is making the roof billow with traditional jazz, teaching the young how hot music could be before amplification, while in another jazz tent, a local fusion band called Woodenhead is getting a standing ovation for teaching traditional jazz fans how far imagination and electronics can push the form. But over there Alice Coltrane is taking an organ solo so far outside you start to think she's never coming back... but if you wait, you'll miss Queen Ida, or Boozoo Chavis, or

It only gets worse, finishing with the main attractions, Dr. John at one end of the racetrack and the Neville's at the other, Los Lobos versus Johnny Adams, B. B. King versus Dave Brubeck, Irma Thomas versus Allen Toussaint. When you trot back and forth to catch parts of each, you get waylaid in the middle by Willie Colon's wicked-great salsa orchestra, where even grumpy-looking guys in I HATE TO DANCE T-shirts are bobbing at the knees and swaying from side to side. By the close of the weekend you stop looking at your schedule and simply wander around, letting whatever notes you hear pull you toward them.

The trick is saving yourself for the evening. There are riverboat concerts, but town is as much of an attraction as the events. You go back to your hotel for a nap, then hit the restaurants and clubs around eleven. First-time visitors head for the Quarter, Miss Ruby's for shrimp creole (expect a wait), and then Storyville or Snug Harbor. Repeat pilgrims head uptown for a plate of "mud

bugs" at Franky & Johnny's, not far from Tipitina's, the Maple Leaf, Benny's, Jimmy's—blues rooms that book the bands you heard playing at the festival that day, often with unexpected guest musicians sitting in.

These are not college throngs, but crowds of thirtysomethings journeyed to Party Town for the sheer love of listening, people whose parents still worry about them, who are here to prove you can boogie til dawn and still age gracefully. In a big show, the main acts might not even take the stage until two or three in the morning. At six, at Benny's, Walter "Wolfman" Washington is still playing the blues, lying on his back and picking with his tooth. It's the kind of town where breakfast joints wouldn't open until eleven.

Though no one regrets what they do for love, some people overindulge. Waiting in line for the Port-O-Let, a college kid bragged, "Man, I don't know what I did last night, but when I woke up, there was a bowling ball in my refrigerator." For the vast (adult) majority, the high comes from the music, a lasting pleasure that restores the soul. Most people take away enough memories from the festival to hook them for good. On the plane home, someone will say, "Every year, I swear I'm not going to do this again, but every year, I'm back." For the food, the music, and a visit with the aging courtesan. Maybe a dance. **E**

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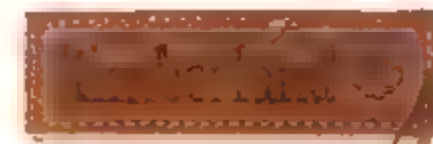
The headline on this page isn't something you should accept without substantiation. So let us hasten to provide it.

Timberland boat shoes are stronger because our construction is superior. You will never see one of our soles flapping loose in the breeze—unstitched from its moccasin upper. We eliminate such stitching altogether in favor of permanent bonding, so shoe and sole stay married until the day they die.

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## Man At His Best

**T**he last man to win the U.S. Open in a pair of knickers was Gene Sarazen. That was back in 1932. Knickers pretty much disappeared after that, and if you want to know the reason why, you'll find it in a hilarious story by P. G. Wodehouse about a character named Vincent Jopp. Jopp was a superb golfer and a handsome man, but he had skinny legs. Just as he was about to win the national championship, one of his ex-wives spotted him from the gallery and cried out, "Those legs! Those legs! You poor dear man! What practical joker ever lured you into appearing in public in knickerbockers?" Jopp was thrown completely off his stroke, naturally, and got badly beaten. The story's underlying message is that not everybody looks good in knickers. That's why they went into decline.

Knickers—or knickerbockers—first appeared in the mid-nineteenth century. They were inspired by the somewhat baggy knee breeches seen in George Cruikshank's illustrations for Washington Irving's *A History of New York*. The name came from "Diedrich Knickerbocker," the pseudonymous author of the book. Knee breeches per se had been around since the sixteenth century. In fact, they were the dominant form of men's pants for more than two hundred years until they became a symbol of the hated aristocracy during the French Revolution. After that, the egalitarian trouser rose to prominence, and knee breeches were relegated to formal dress, court attire, and sport.

The highly comfortable knickerbockers became fashionable in England when the Prince of Wales (later Edward VII) wore them in combination with a voluminous Inverness tweed cape and loud socks while out on shooting parties. During the First World War, the British Guards wore longer, even baggier knickerbockers that extended four inches below the knee and came to be known as "plus fours."



CLASSICS

## Knickers

BY JOHN BERENDT

These were popularized for golf by another Prince of Wales, the Duke of Windsor. Knickers were perfect for golfing, they enabled a man to forage in the rough without snagging a trouser cuff. They were also said to prevent cheating in knickers, a man couldn't drop a ball down his

trouser leg to get a better lie on the fairway. The British still call knickerbockers by their full name, incidentally, because in England the term *knickers* refers to ladies' underpants.

Toward the end of the last century, an attempt was made to reestablish knee breeches as an

acceptable substitute for trousers in town. George Bernard Shaw, who was an active member of the Healthy and Artistic Dress Union, strode about London in woolen knickerbocker suits, convinced that overlapping trousers and socks were bad for circulation. Oscar Wilde joined the knicker campaign, too, but primarily on aesthetic grounds. He simply liked the look of knickers and denounced trousers as "boring tubes." Ultimately the campaign failed, though at one point in the 1930s, tailors in Britain attempted to accommodate every

**It is likely to be  
a modest  
revival—limited  
to those  
with the legs for it.**

body by producing four-piece suits consisting of jacket, waistcoat, trousers, and knickers.

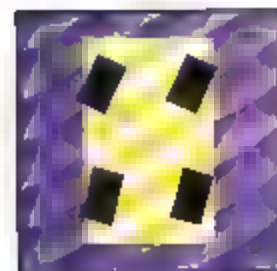
But by that time, the Vincent Jopps of the world were finally catching on. In 1929 the American ambassador to Britain—former vice-president Charles Dawes—flatly refused to wear knee breeches while being presented at court. Eight years later, Joseph P. Kennedy became ambassador, and he was so bow-legged he sought permission to wear trousers for his royal audience, and it was granted. Knickers were clearly on the way out. They were spared from total extinction, however, through the good grace of mountain climbers, skiers, and woodsmen, who continued to wear them because they were functional. And now in recent seasons, pro golfers Payne Stewart and Patty Sheehan have turned up on the golf course in knickers and started something of a knicker revival. Mail-order catalogs (L. L. Bean and J. Peterman) have begun to offer them, and Ralph Lauren has added them to the Polo line. It is likely to be a modest revival, however—limited to those who have the legs for it. **E**

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When a hook and ladder truck comes screaming down the street, does your attention drift to the driver in the back? The one who, by having rear wheels that turn, is able to guide that oversized vehicle easily around the tightest corners and through the worst kind of traffic?

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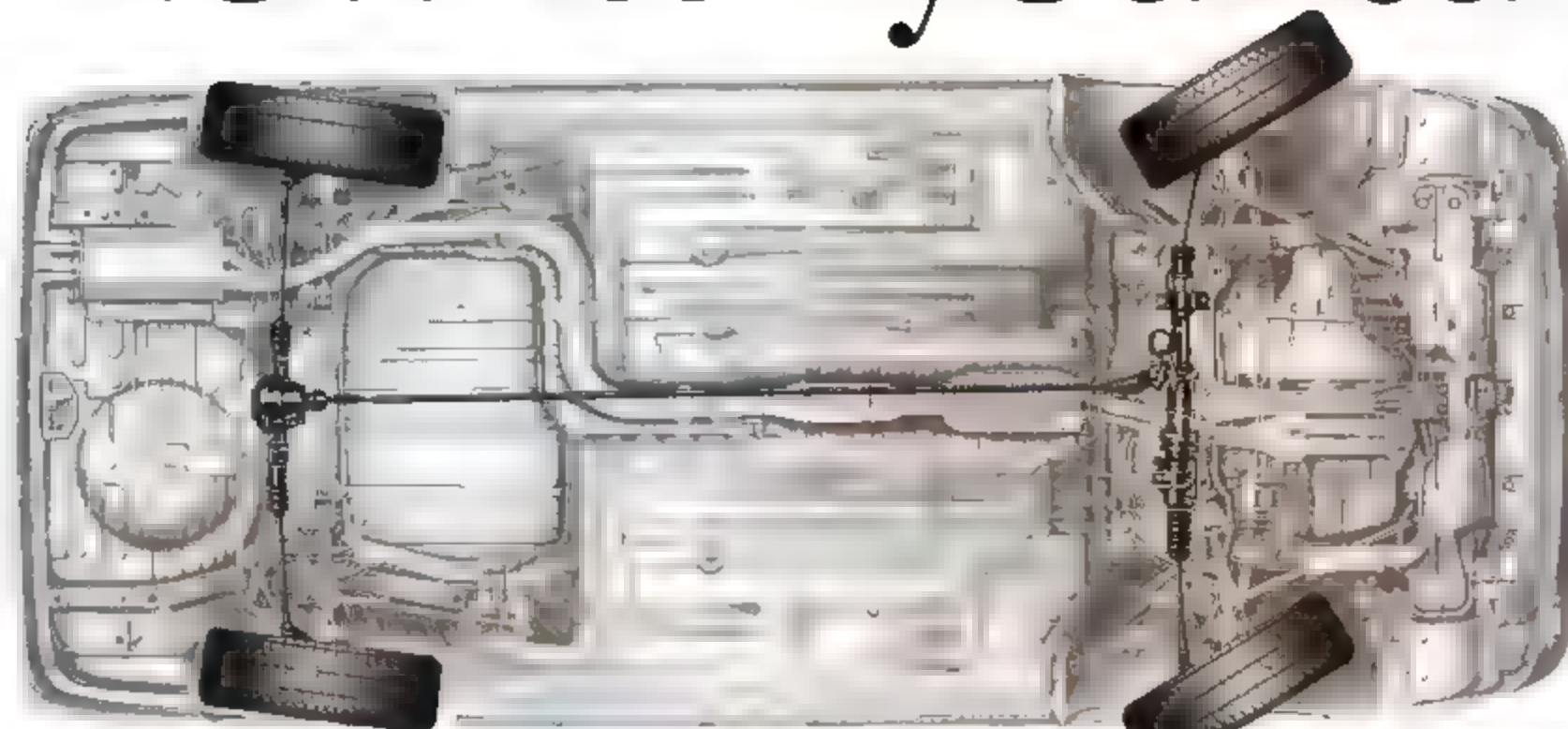
It is the world's first steer-angle dependent system: you control how much the rear wheels turn by how much you turn the steering wheel.

If you turn the steering wheel a little, which you would tend to do at highway speeds, the rear wheels turn a little—1.5°—in the same direction as the front wheels.

This subtle change creates a heightened level of handling and stability.

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Four-wheel steering helped the 1988 Prelude Si post the fastest slalom time in Road & Track's driving tests: 65.5 mph—faster than a Ferrari 328GTS or Porsche 944 Turbo.



Honda reinvents the wheels with a reliable, all-mechanical four-wheel steering system that

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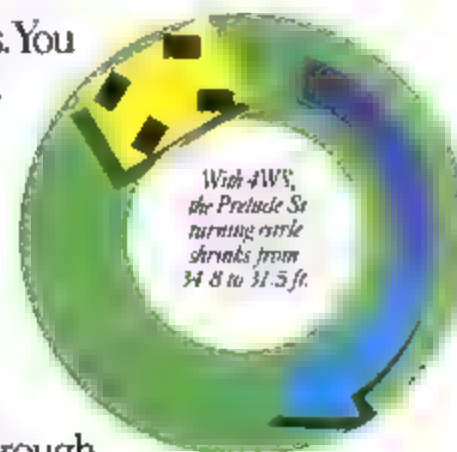
and turns L turns into U turns.

practically effortless. You feel comfortably in control, even on slippery surfaces.

Four-wheel steering comes in handy for low speed maneuvers, too.

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Honda engineers were first intrigued by the possibilities of steering the rear wheels



back in 1977. Four-wheel steering had never been designed successfully into a production passenger car. They set out to change that.

They knew that when the front wheels steer, there is always a delay from the time you turn the steering wheel to the moment the car turns. When all four wheels steer,

this delay is reduced and the car reacts more quickly to directional demands.

After eleven years of intense research, Honda engineers chose a purely mechanical steering system for its simplicity and reliability. The front and rear wheels are linked by a steering shaft that connects the front and rear gearboxes. There are no hydraulics or complex microprocessors to worry about.

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4 wheel steering



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## Man At His Best

**M**any years ago, off Iquique, Chile, I caught a 630-pound swordfish from an old tub of a boat, and while the contest is now memorable only for a very painful back that left me walking like a zombie, the recollection of swordfish steaks grilled over a wood fire on a moonlit beach is indelible; peach-colored slabs steaming at the center but charred black at the edges and slathered with lemon butter. Recently I had a swordfish steak at Little Palm Island in the Florida Keys, where chef Michel Reymond's strikingly colorful version is probably the ultimate tribute to *Xiphias gladius* (*Xiphias* the ancient name for fish, and *gladius* the name for a Roman broadsword).

Swordfish are found in all temperate seas of the world, and although they often bask at the surface, they may feed at abyssal depths—down to two thousand feet or more (which is where one attacked the Woods Hole research submersible, *Alvin*, getting its bill wedged so tightly in a seam that it became a temporary fixture on the craft). They live a yo-yo existence, sometimes feeding on fishes rarely seen by man: lantern fish, dragonfish, and other oddball creatures that live in eternal darkness. At nightfall they swim toward the surface to forage for squid.

Most swordfish taken on rod and reel are caught after dark on a squid bait tethered to a phosphorescent "light stick" (cyalum, that glows in the water). The broadbills found at the surface in daylight (easily spotted by their rigid scythelike dorsal fins) are apparently well fed, if you're lucky, one out of ten will show interest in a bait. The average two-hundred-pound fish taken by harpoon brings at least \$4 to \$5 a pound dockside, so during days of scarcity, commercial fishermen use small aircraft to locate basking fish for harpooners to target. With thirty to fifty boats at sea in a relatively small area, the low-flying traffic often



THE SEASONED COOK

### A Sworded Affair

BY A J MCCLANE

resembles Baron von Richthofen's Flying Circus in a dogfight.

A fresh swordfish steak may be white or, less often, peach in color; the latter is simply a reflection of the individual fish's predominantly squid diet and turns ivory when cooked. Innocent buyers often spurn peach-colored steaks, yet these are the richest and most flavorful, especially from fish harpooned somewhere between the New Jersey coast and Block Island. Our best swordfish are domestic in origin, from southern California or along the East Coast from Newfoundland to Florida, and are taken either by harpoon or rod and reel. Those caught by commercial longlines baited with a thousand hooks, which often

leave the fish soaking in the sea for prolonged periods, are variable in quality. The world-roaming Chinese fleets are all longliners or drift netters, and better you should eat egg roll.

Swordfish steaks are usually grilled or baked, or cut in cubes, marinated in herb-flavored oil, and cooked on skewers over charcoal, a favorite method in Mediterranean countries. As with all fish, overcooking is the most common kitchen fault; the density of swordfish causes it to dry out rather quickly. The trick is to use steaks *no more than* three quarters of an inch thick. Wipe them in peanut oil, sear quickly on both sides under the broiler (or over high heat on a charcoal grill), then hold in a

warm oven (or to one side of the grill away from the coals) for six to eight minutes so that the fish cooks slowly and evenly. With swordfish, unlike beefsteak, think "thin" for juicy results.

Michel Reymond's recipe, as done at Little Palm Island, transcends the ordinary, as does the offshore island itself. A creation

**They feed on fish  
rarely seen  
by man, oddballs  
that live in  
eternal darkness.**

of Memphis sportsman Ben Woodson, Little Palm Island is located on the ocean side of the Florida Keys, 28 1/2 miles north of Key West, and can be reached by the resort's launch based at Little Torch Key. The exotic palm thatched-roof complex of individual bungalows was formerly the fishing retreat of Presidents Roosevelt, Truman, Kennedy, and Nixon. Fresh yellowtail, red snapper, grouper, dolphin, and tuna are literally delivered to Reymond's doorstep, but on that recent evening, swordfish steaks in papaya sauce were the featured event. The dish takes a little time to prepare, but the results are spectacular.

#### Swordfish in Papaya Sauce

Assuming a dinner for four, you will first marinate four eight-ounce swordfish steaks. For the marinade you need a bunch of parsley, thirty-six basil leaves, one tablespoon each of rosemary and thyme, one small onion, three cloves of garlic, and a cup of olive oil, plus salt and pepper to taste. Blend in a food processor until smooth. Place the fish in the marinade and refrigerate for at least four hours.

For the garnish you will need a papaya; skin the fruit, remove the seeds, and puree, adding a dash of lemon juice. The other ingredient is an uncooked red beet, peeled and cut into very fine

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## Man At His Best

julienne, then left to soak in ice water until the slivers are crisp.

The swordfish steaks rest in a puddle of beurre blanc, which is prepared as follows

½ cup fish stock  
2 cups dry white wine  
1 bay leaf  
1 shallot, peeled  
½ cup heavy cream  
1 cup butter, softened  
Dash of lemon juice  
2 tablespoons papaya puree (keep the rest for garnish)  
Salt and pepper to taste  
Dash of Worcestershire sauce

Put the fish stock, wine, bay leaf, and shallot in a small saucepan. Add the cream and simmer until reduced to one-half cup. Whip the butter in a bowl until very light in color, then slowly whisk it into the wine reduction. Whip until smooth, then add the lemon juice, papaya puree, salt and pepper, and Worcestershire sauce. Strain through a fine sieve and keep warm.

You can prepare the steaks on a charcoal grill or, as Raymond prefers, at high heat in a raised cast-iron skillet. The latter will also leave grid marks on the fish and help retain the green color of the marinade. It will take about twenty seconds on each side for the steaks to be seared yet keep their herb color. After that, they should be placed in a warm oven for three to five minutes, depending on thickness.

Spread generous tablespoons of beurre blanc on the bottom of each serving plate and place the fish in the center. With a small spoon or squeeze bottle, run a thin circle of the remaining papaya puree around each steak. Using a food pick, swirl the papaya and beurre blanc in a circular motion, creating white and orange ringlets. Dry the beet julienne in a paper towel and sprinkle over the fish.

A Chardonnay by Joseph Phelps, Château Montelena, Kendall Jackson, or Cakebread would go nicely with this somewhat rich dish. **E**



PRACTICAL MATTERS

## Mid-life Sax

BY JOSEPH NOCERA

**M**iddle-aged married guy walks into a saxophone store. "Can I help you?" asks the proprietor. "This is a little embarrassing," the guy begins, but before he can say any more, the proprietor cuts in. "Let me guess. You've just turned forty, and you've decided to take up the tenor sax." The guy blushes. "Actually," he replies finally, "I'm about to turn forty, and I was thinking more about an alto."

True story. Here's another one: Middle-aged married guy decides to hold a gala bash for his fortieth birthday. One of his middle-aged friends brings along his tenor sax, which he calls his "ax," and which, it turns out, he has been playing for all of a month. Despite this lack of—talent? experience? practice? all of the above?—he is planning on entertaining (subjecting? torturing?) this decided-

ly captive audience with his swinging rendition of "Happy Birthday." The moment he puts reed to lips, however, we in the audience realize that this is, quite simply, the most awful saxophone playing we will ever hear in our lives. Embarrassed looks are exchanged. There is a dramatic upswing in bathroom visits. Then—the topper—when he finally puts his "ax" away, the guy spends the rest of the evening pitifully fishing for compliments.

What's that, you say? You've got a few stories like this of your own? Yes, well, I'm not surprised. This business of middle-aged men dealing with their mid-life crises by taking up the saxophone has gotten completely out of hand.

You need not take my word for it. I offer, as confirmation, the experience of Sheldon Wax of Rayburn Musical Instruments in Boston—saxophone suppliers to the stars (Sonny Rollins, Ar-

chie Shepp, et cetera, et cetera). "Doctors, lawyers, brokers, they're all taking up the saxophone," he says gleefully. Mr. Wax does not see this as an ominous development. Unlike the rest of us, he gets paid to endure bad saxophone playing.

It is difficult to know what is in the air right now that has caused this pandemic of public saxophonizing. Is it a form of cheap therapy? Does it speak to some peculiarly rich fantasy life of the average middle-aged guy, an attempt, perhaps, to retrace some road not taken long ago? Or maybe it is simply a sad, desperate plea for attention. (This is my own theory.) And why the saxophone, for God's sake? Why not some quieter instrument, like, oh, the flute, or something heavier, like the piano—which, among its many virtues, can't be lugged around to parties?

I don't know. And, like most people who have been forced to put up with the honking and squeaking emanating from the proliferating number of saxophones held in hopelessly untutored hands, I don't much care. I just want it to stop.

Something needs to be said here, so I'm going to say it: Men, it's unseemly to play a musical instrument in public when you barely know a sharp from a flat. It's embarrassing. It's painful. It's dumb. However much your friends may love you, they don't want to have to listen to you try to play an instrument you can't play. Really. They don't.

Sheldon Wax again. "I've got one guy who takes lessons from me. His wife couldn't stand listening to him. So finally, she converted a closet into a practice room, with a light, a seat, and a music stand. She had it completely soundproofed." This is what I call the Gene Hackman approach to saxophone playing (see *The Conversation* for further enlightenment). In the name of your friends and loved ones, I beg of you: go and do likewise. Otherwise, next time you pull out your ax, we're not going to be so nice. **E**



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## American Beat

# Nature Boy

By Bob Greene

**S**OME PEOPLE I DIDN'T KNOW had treated me in what I considered to be a rather mean fashion. I was wondering what the proper response might be.

Now, if a similar thing happened to you, you might seek the advice of an attorney.

Or you might ask for wisdom from your pastor or priest.

Or you might turn to a family member for solace.

Not me. My first thought was to find Buddy "Nature Boy" Rogers.

At right:  
Buddy Rogers with  
his family—  
his son, Dave, and  
wife, Debbie

BLODDY "NATURE BOY" ROGERS WAS a blond-haired, muscular, impossibly handsome professional wrestler who came to national prominence during the first days of television. Please do not confuse Buddy "Nature Boy" Rogers with someone like Gorgeous George. Gorgeous George was a joke, Gorgeous George

was a silly, primping cartoon of a man, calculated to draw laughs. Buddy Rogers, though...Buddy Rogers was just about the studiest guy I had ever seen. You didn't laugh at Buddy Rogers. You gazed in awe.

The only reason that, as a boy, I ever was able to see Buddy Rogers in person was due to an accident of geography. Buddy Rogers was a big national star. He wrestled regularly in the largest arenas in New York and Chicago. But because the city of my youth—Columbus, Ohio—was approximately halfway between the two metropolises, the major wrestling stars would often stop off for an extra payday.

On Saturday afternoons, a local television program known as *Lex's Live Wrestling* was broadcast on Channel 4

**Bob Greene** is a contributing editor of *Esquire* magazine. His new book, *Homecoming: When the Soldiers Returned from Vietnam*, has been published by G.P. Putnam's Sons.



**When you need help,  
why not call the meanest,  
coolest guy around?**

in Columbus. The host was Lex Mayers, a heavyset, bespectacled Columbus Chevrolet dealer who, between falls, would proclaim the wonders of his used cars. This all took place at Old Memorial Hall on East Broad Street, and for fifty cents one could be a member of the audience. Which I was, just about every Saturday during my twelfth year on Earth.

And there, right in Old Memorial Hall, was Buddy "Nature Boy" Rogers. He was everything a skinny, shy midwestern boy longed to be. He was huge and golden haired and rippling with muscles, and he could flash a sneer that would melt women's hearts and fill men with envy. And the walk! Buddy Rogers

moved about with this strut—it was so cool, and so cocky that he seemed to be strutting even when he was standing still.

He was often cast as a "bad guy." I remember once, a wrestler named Leon Graham had injured his back during a tag-team match in which Buddy Rogers was involved. Leon Graham was being taken to the hospital on a stretcher. Buddy Rogers offered to help carry the stretcher. The fans cried out in protest. Buddy Rogers raised his hands to the crowd, the picture of innocence. He was allowed to assist with the stretcher. As he and the other stretcher-bearers passed a ten foot drop, Buddy Rogers raised his knee sharply and suddenly beneath the stretcher, propelling poor Leon Graham down those ten feet to the cement floor. Graham landed hard and did not move. This

couldn't have been taken; I saw it with my own eyes. Buddy Rogers sneered and strutted away.

Clearly, in my time of need, Buddy "Nature Boy" Rogers was the man to help me.

ALONG THE STREETS of a pleasant, quiet neighborhood in Lauderdale-by-the-Sea, Florida, I looked out of the car window for the right address. It was early evening. A few houses up, I saw a man and a woman standing on their front lawn.

"Were my directions okay?" said Buddy "Nature Boy" Rogers.

He and his wife, Debbie, led me into their home. I had not been specific when



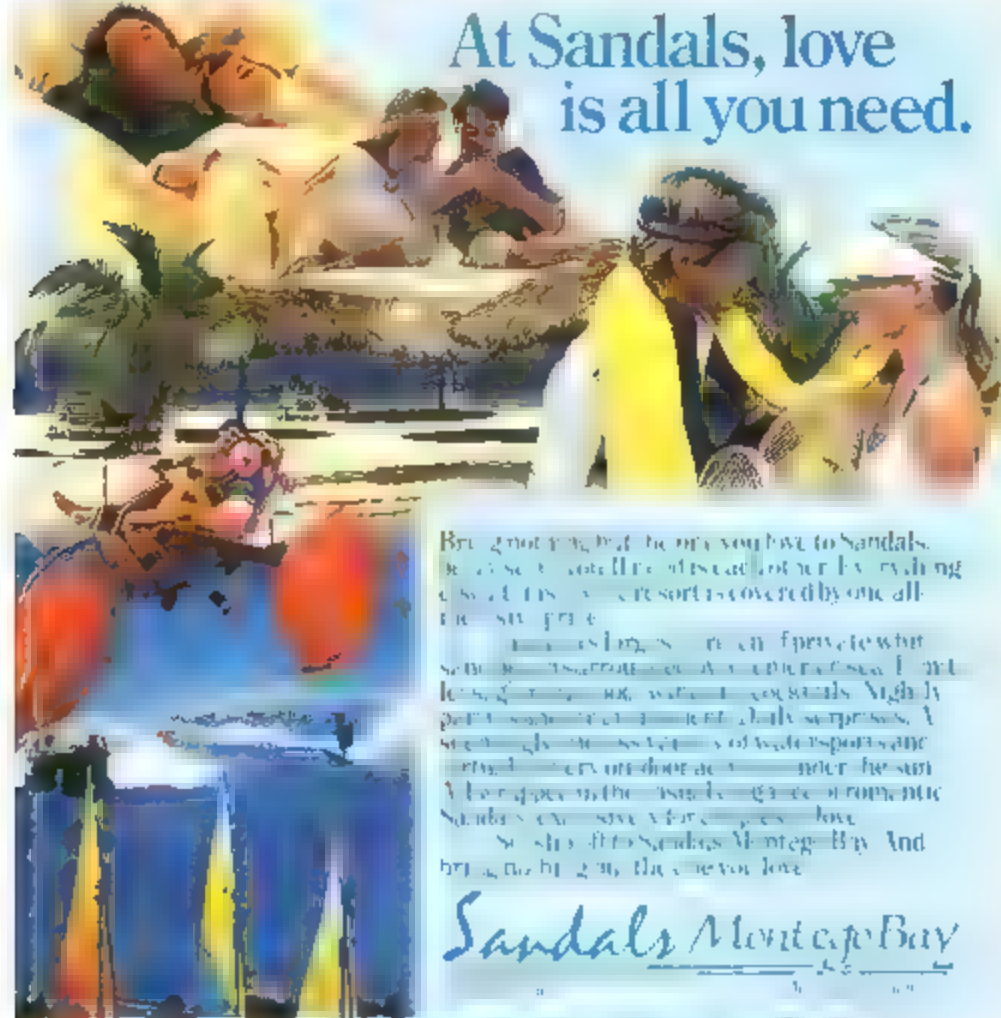
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I had asked him if I could talk to him, and I'm sure he wondered what the exact reason for my visit was. As I followed him inside, I could see that he was limping. And of course, many years had passed since the days of *Lex's Live Wrestling*.

Buddy Rogers and I sat at a table on his screened-in back porch. I said that I was in search of vengeance—vengeance of the physical sort. I had thought that perhaps he could help me.

"Bobby, I wish I could," he said. "But I was just in the hospital. I had an artificial hip put in. Then I slipped and fell out in the garage, and I had to go back into the hospital again. Bobby, I'm sixty-seven years old."

We just sat there. Mrs. Rogers brought us each a glass of vodka.

"Do you mind if I stick around for a while anyway?" I said.

Rogers didn't say a word to me. He just flashed me that sneer.

HE SAID THAT HE HAD RETIRED from wrestling in 1963. I mentioned the name of Hulk Hogan to him, and a look of distaste crossed his face.

"If I was in my prime right now, there'd be no Hulk Hogan," he said. And he was right, Hulk Hogan, for all his success, is really just a pale imitation of Buddy Rogers—a vivid but ultimately unthreatening creature of marketing and clever promotion, the Gorgeous George cartoon with an '80s twist. "I was born too soon," Buddy Rogers said. "I'd inhale them guys today."

Mounted on the wall of the screened-in porch was a plaque bearing the phrase: "TOMORROW IS A VISION. YESTERDAY IS A MEMORY. BUT TODAY IS A BEACH." Rogers, who grew up in Camden, New Jersey, said he is quite content to be living in Florida.

He said again that he would still be capable of physical violence if it hadn't been for the recent hospitalization.

"If he didn't have the hip operation..." said Mrs. Rogers.

"I could still do some things, right now," Rogers said. "If I latch onto your head, you're not going anywhere."

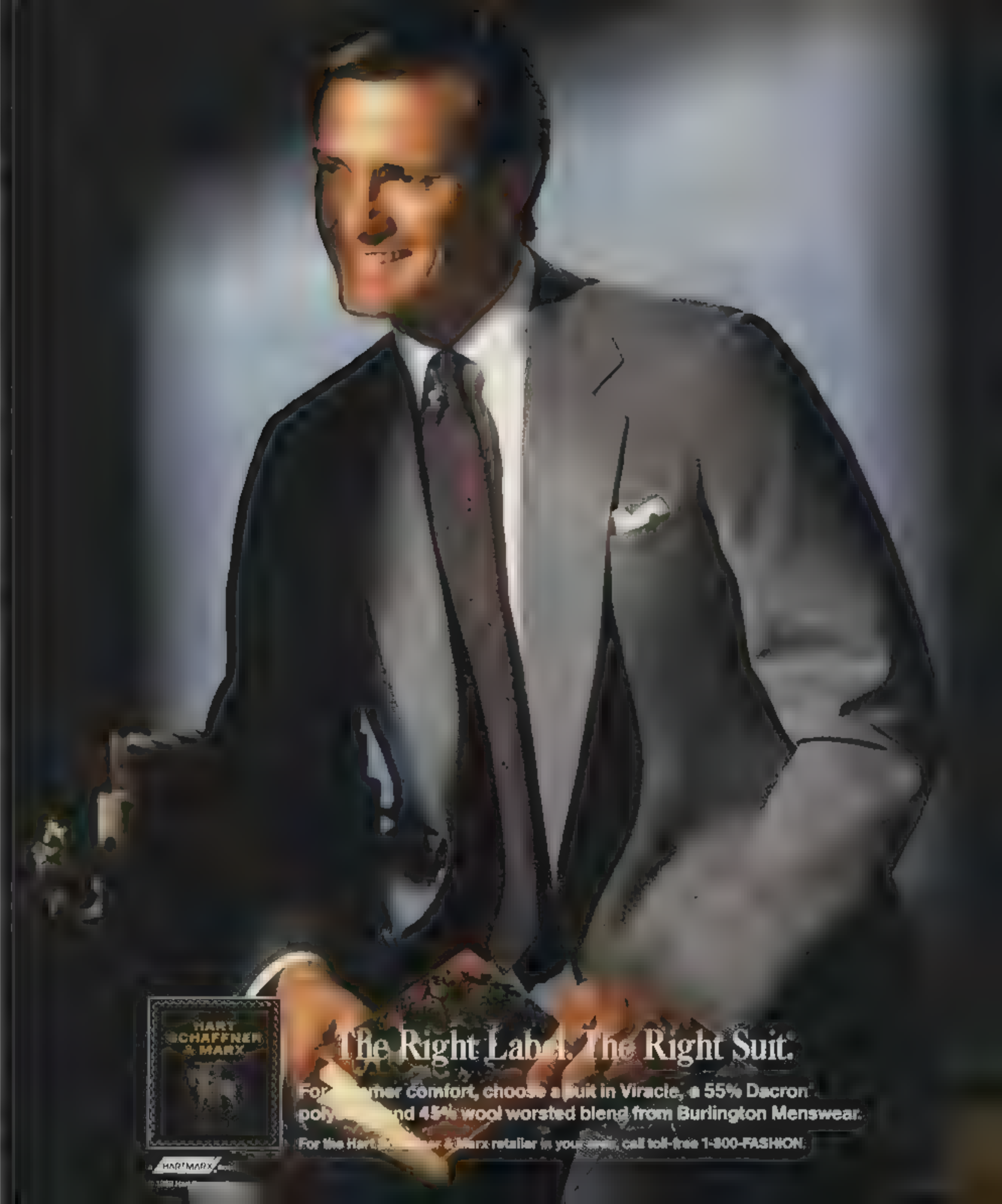
I mentioned what I had seen him do to the unfortunate Leon Graham—the knee under the stretcher, and the sickening fall to the hard cement. Had he felt any remorse for that?

Nature Boy shrugged. "That's the chance you take," he said.

"Buddy," I said, "that's not the chance that you took. That's the chance that Leon Graham took."

He shrugged again, not very interested.

I asked him if women had pursued him during his days of stardom. He looked over at Mrs. Rogers.



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"Go ahead, Buddy," she said. They were married after his retirement from wrestling.

"I'd be lying to you if I said that the women didn't come around," he said. "And the funny thing is, they seemed to be more attracted to me when I was a bad guy than when I was a good guy." Like many wrestlers, Rogers's ring personality shifted from year to year and city to city.

"I don't know why they liked me more when I was a bad guy," he said. "I think it's the nature of a woman. I think it's a challenge for a woman to take a guy like me and think, 'I can straighten him out.'"

And how did he treat those women?

**"Do you mind if  
I stick around for a while?"  
I said. Rogers didn't  
say a word. He just flashed  
me that sneer.**

"I'd treat 'em like dirt sometimes," he said. "I'd treat 'em like they were wrestlers. I guess everyone else treated them sweet and nice and gentle. I know it's not a good thing to say, especially in this day and age, but it always seemed that the badder I'd treat them, they'd like it better."

I glanced over at Mrs. Rogers to see if she was showing any disapproval, but she was smiling, almost proudly.

I ASKED ROGERS if he had any videotapes of his old matches.

"I don't think so," he said.

"Buddy, we have that one," his wife said.

"Well, that one," he said.

Mrs. Rogers left the room and came back in with a cassette. "I don't even know how to work the VCR," she said. "Our son, Dave, does, but he's asleep in the other room."

"Let me try it," I said.

We walked into the den, and I slipped the tape into the slot of the machine.

"Is that couch too low for you, Buddy?"

Mrs. Rogers said. He had sat down.

"No," Rogers said.

"This chair's higher," Mrs. Rogers said.

"I'm okay," Rogers said.

I hit the "play" button. Suddenly, on the screen, it was June 29, 1960, in Chicago's Comiskey Park, and Buddy Rogers was in the ring preparing to wrestle Pat O'Connor for the heavyweight championship of the world. More than forty-one thousand fans filled the baseball stadium.

The ring announcer's voice "In this corner... weighing two hundred forty two pounds... from Camden, New Jersey..."

The next words were drowned out by the boos of the crowd.

In his Florida living room, Buddy Rogers said, "The minute you walk out of the dressing room and toward the ring, they develop a hate for you." His voice was devoid of any particular emotion.

The match began. What was amazing—what I had forgotten—was that there were no extreme close-ups in television coverage of wrestling matches back then. It was from a distance, and all in black and

white. Yet even without the camera tricks that are now used to build up athletes' personalities in the eyes of viewers, Rogers dominated the screen. Pat O'Connor somehow became invisible.

"You would have been something in color, and with close-ups," I said.

On the couch, Rogers stared at the screen.

The TV announcer: "Listen to the crowd as Rogers falls full-length on the mat!"

On TV, Rogers picked himself up and walked in circles around the periphery of the ring. Before I could mention it, the voice of the TV announcer said it for me.

"The Buddy Rogers strut!"

"Did you have to practice that?" I said.

"No, it was natural," Rogers said.

"That's the way you walked down the hallways of your high school?" I said.

"I guess it was," he said.

WHEN THE TAPE HAD RUN OUT, with Rogers winning the match, Mr. and Mrs. Rogers asked me if I felt like going out to dinner. I said of course.

I went outside first and waited by the car. Buddy Rogers came out of the house.

"Have you got your cane, Buddy?" his wife said.

"No," he said. It was the first time a cane had been mentioned.

"Should I get it for you?" Mrs. Rogers said.

Rogers paused for a moment and then said, "Forget it."

But she went back into the house and came out with a cane. We drove for about five minutes, and pulled into the parking lot of a shopping strip. We were going to eat at an Italian place called Casa Bella.

Buddy Rogers and his wife entered the restaurant before I did. Walking behind them, I found myself grinning like a kid. Can you imagine a man with a cane strutting? Believe me, it's great. ■







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## The Sporting Life

# Simply Darling

By Mike Lupica

**T**HERE HAVE BEEN two professional sports teams in the 1980s more interesting than all the rest: the Los Angeles Lakers basketball team and the New York Mets baseball team.

The Lakers win all the time, making almost all their noise on the court. The Mets have won only once. But off the field they make more noise than anyone.

Think of it this way: the Lakers have been Meryl Streep. The Mets have been Marilyn Monroe. The Lakers have been a great body of work. The Mets have been a great body.

The Chicago Bears? People think the Bears are interesting because the coach, Mike Ditka, used to yell at the quarterback, Jim McMahon. If you can name six Bears after those two, you go right into the Lightning Round. The Celtics? The Celtics have been interesting because of (a) Larry Bird and (b) an inordinate number of players with the exact same skin color as Bird.

The 49ers? They sure won an awful lot in the '80s. Go pick Joe Montana out of a police lineup.

Wayne Gretzky's Edmonton Oilers might have been included except for the fact that they played (a) on skates and (b) someplace near Alaska.

It has been, for vastly different reasons, the decade of the Lakers and the Mets. They have been the cover boys. The Lakers have established themselves as perhaps the greatest basketball team of all time. In an era when no one has been able to repeat in any of the major (that is, non-hockey) team sports, the Lakers did. The Lakers of the '80s have been to seven finals and won five. Magic Johnson is the Bill Russell of his generation. He has turned what would have been a fine team without him into something splendid, for history.

But take the Lakers out of the Forum

Mike Lupica is a contributing editor of Esquire



**Ron proposes break  
with hallowed Mets tradition:  
Shut up and play ball!**

and it's not as if they have to keep giving the *National Enquirer* the dodge. Okay, Magic kisses Isiah Thomas before big games, something no one can remember Wilt doing with Russell, exactly. And Kareem shaved his head. Pat Riley gets those shirts in Hong Kong, isn't that special? Mostly, the Lakers command our attention by winning basketball championships. The Lakers don't talk

about it. They do it.

Three thousand miles away, the Mets talk all the time, when they are happy and unhappy, winning championships and losing them, in season and out of season, on the record, off the record, about themselves, about each other, about the other team. Not since the Oakland A's and the New York Yankees of the '70s has there been a team like the Mets. It is amazing that they have shut their mouths enough over the last five seasons to average more than ninety-seven wins, capture a world championship, blow another, and fall short in a couple of wonderful divisional races.

One year ago in *The Sporting Life*, Darryl Strawberry began talking about his teammates and made national headlines. As another baseball season begins, I am curious about what it is like to be a Met, and to have each season covered—and uncovered—as if the Mets were all presidential candidates.

Also, when I get a good thing, I stay with it.

"THE TRUTH IS, I do get tired of being a Met sometimes," Ron Darling says. "I'm talking about all the soap-opera stuff that comes with being a Met. A lot of it is wonderful, don't misunderstand me. But sometimes I wish it were more like San Diego, or someplace else, where all that matters is whether you pitch well or don't pitch well."

Darling is sitting in the downstairs



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<b>DELAWARE</b> Phillips Mens Shop, Laurel	<b>NEW YORK</b> AM&A, at selected stores Bresee's, Oneonta Hank's, Binghamton McCurdy's, at selected stores Schechter's, New Hartford
<b>GEORGIA</b> Belk's, at selected stores	<b>NORTH CAROLINA</b> Belk's, Asheville, Hickory, Wilmington
<b>IDAHO</b> The Bazaar, Boise	<b>OHIO</b> Elder Beerman, at selected stores Higbee Co., at selected stores McAlpins, Cincinnati Leon Store, Toledo The Wooden Square, Columbus
<b>ILLINOIS</b> Crawford Suburban, Rolling Meadows Lipofsky's, Barrington Men's and Boy's Place, Park Ridge Spiegler's, Des Plaines Thornberry's, Buffalo Grove	<b>OREGON</b> Jackson's, Medford Pacific Crest Clothing, Gresham
<b>INDIANA</b> David's Mens Wear, Valparaiso J. Shepard, Inc., Indianapolis	<b>PENNSYLVANIA</b> Strawbridge & Clothiers, at selected stores
<b>IOWA</b> Petersen Harned Von Maur, at selected stores	<b>SOUTH CAROLINA</b> Belk's, Myrtle Beach, Spartanburg
<b>KANSAS</b> Dillard's, Mission, Overland Park	<b>TENNESSEE</b> Castner Knott, at selected stores Proffitt's, at selected stores Rich-Schwartz, Memphis
<b>KENTUCKY</b> Bacon's, at selected stores McAlpins, Lexington	<b>VIRGINIA</b> Leggett, at selected stores
<b>MICHIGAN</b> Jacobson Stores, Jackson	<b>WISCONSIN</b> Anderson's for Him, Janesville Cedarburg Woolen Mills His-N-Hers Town and Country, Whitefish Bay The Hub, Madison Milwaukee-Boston Store, at selected stores St. Clair's, Wausau
<b>MISSOURI</b> Dillard's, at selected stores	

Country Traditionals  
By Pendleton

living room of the Fifth Avenue duplex he shares with his actress-model wife, Toni, and their two year-old son, Tyler Christian Darling. He is, on this night, playing "John Lennon househusband", that is what he is telling friends who call on the telephone. Toni Darling, a redheaded Irish beauty, is at a gym with a girlfriend. In an hour, Ron and Tyler will walk a few blocks through the hurly-burly of nighttime Manhattan to Madison Square Garden for the Knicks game. They will sit in the celebrity seats courtside, turning heads as soon as they walk into the building. Darling is a Met.

He is, in the words of a Hollywood person I know, "movie-star beautiful." He was born in Hawaii. His face is dark, handsome, unusual—all at the same time. The little boy is a reflection of the father, dark and striking. But the eyes of Garden fans would follow them if Darling looked like Roseanne Barr. Darling is a Met.

Darling is both thoughtful and sensitive, a product of Yale, a collector of art, someone whose first move is actually to the front page of *The New York Times*, not the back pages of the New York tabloids. He is a glamorous figure in Manhattan, the way sports stars of his stature used to be.

But Darling did something unusual last season, he tried to disappear when he wasn't throwing a baseball.

He did not stop talking to the media. He was just consistently unavailable. Before games, he was in the players lounge or the trainer's room, both off limits to civilians. When he pitched, he was at his locker afterwards to talk about pitching. That was it. He was not Steve Carlton. But apart from the thirty-four times he started (17-9, 3.25 ERA), he was just not there.

In the penthouse now, Ron Darling smiles at the irony of a Met voluntarily shutting up.

"I tried to put on vanishing cream," he says. "We have so many guys on our team being quoted all the time. I sit back sometimes and say, 'What are they talking about?' I just want to say, 'Why don't you guys just shut the fuck up once in a while?'"

Strawberry is the best talker. About everything. On the eve of the Mets-Dodgers playoff series last October, he was quoted in a *Los Angeles Times* story saying he wanted to be a Dodger someday. Keith Hernandez, the team's co-captain, tries to play writers as if they were musical instruments, jumping on and off the record with such speed that some writers say they feel as if they are talking to two people.

The other co-captain, Gary Carter, is right in there for the gold medal with the likes of Strawberry and Hernandez, answering every last question, generally polite

to a fault. The Mets' Steve Garvey.

The manager, Davey Johnson, used to talk more, until his mouth nearly got him fired. By the summer of 1988 he had learned, with almost visible strain sometimes, how to say "no comment." It helped get him a contract extension, even though the Mets lost in seven games to the Dodgers after being three outs away from taking a three-to-one lead in the series.

Even newcomer David Cone, who finished with a 20-3 record last season, caused a national ruckus during the Mets-Dodgers series by talking about Dodger reliever Jay Howell's "high school" curveball in a column ghosted for him in my paper, the *New York Daily News*.

It is some show, and it plays across all twelve months. The Mets, in New York, are never out of season. I once asked a Detroit writer how Sparky Anderson controls controversy in the Tigers clubhouse. The writer told me he remembered an argument between Jack Morris and Guillermo Hernandez. Sparky got wind of it, came out of his office, snapped "Zip it!" and disappeared back into the office.

If Davey Johnson tried that, there is a chance none of the Met players would be able to hear him over the sound of their own interviews.

"No team in baseball is even close to us for stuff like this," Darling says. "Now, how much of it is New York and how much the players we happen to have? Hard to say. If the same things happened in San Diego, or Cleveland, or anywhere else, there'd be a reaction, sure. But the end result is that it's bigger here, magnified beyond all reasonable proportion."

PERHAPS THE LAST great newspaper war in America is waged every day in New York City, where there are four major dailies: the *Times*, the *Daily News*, the *Post*, and *Newsday*. There is almost a *Front Page* quality to the competition, and nowhere is the competition more fiercely waged than on the beat of the New York Mets.

But the Mets are made for this sort of war. No collection of athletes in my experience has been more obsessed by what is written about them. In spring training, a Federal Express packet arrives almost every day at the Mets office in Port St. Lucie. In it are the previous day's newspaper stories about the Mets, from the four New York City dailies, *USA Today*, and the Newark *Star-Ledger* and the Bergen *Record* in New Jersey. Once the season starts, the clippings are sent to wherever the Mets are playing on the road. To say that a lot of Mets are more than a little interested in these clippings is to say that drowning men are more than a little interested in life preservers.



"We need less emphasis on the press stuff," Darling says. "We need less bickering. We need less backstabbing. I'm sure some of this goes on with every team. But not many winning teams. Ultimately, it's lousy teams that end up having the most backstabbing."

"We don't have a happy clubhouse," he adds with opening day not so far away. "We have a lot of happy groups. But maybe the groups work against each other."

"Doesn't management know that?"

"Oh, they get reports from the clubhouse from two or three stoolies. But the

result is they get a tainted version because the stoolies are going to say what they have to stay with the team."

AS THE METS have been built, they have specialized in Wonder Boys.

First, there was Darryl Strawberry. Then came Dwight Gooden. And out of the farm system last summer came the newest, a switch hitting infielder named Gregg Jefferies, age twenty-one. In just twenty nine games Jefferies had thirty-five hits, fourteen of them for extra bases, six home runs, nineteen RBI, a .321 batting average. He

had cemented a starting job by the time the playoffs started, and even though he made a couple of costly mistakes against the Dodgers—one on the bases, one in the field—he managed to hit .333, starting all seven games. If he doesn't break a leg, he will be Rookie of the Year this season.

I ask Darling how Jefferies will handle himself with the New York media.

"Young players learn from older players," Darling says. "It's always been that way. So Gregg will be looking to Keith and Gary and Darryl. And I'm not sure those are necessarily great lessons for him to learn. It's their personality to like to talk. Fine. That's the way they are. But young players have to know it's not a rule that you have to talk that much."

"What he really should be thinking about—and I think he will, from what I saw last year—is this: 'How do I hit Kevin Gross's fastball?' If I told him one thing, it would be that it's not important to sell yourself. Playing well sells yourself."

#### CAN THE METS WIN AGAIN?

Even with all the talent Darling talks about, they haven't been a baseball team so much as group therapy.

"If the games were played on Macintosh computers, we'd probably win every season," Darling says. "But they're not played on a Macintosh. They're played on grass and dirt, with umpires and people in the stands, and human beings on the field. Real live stuff. And in that context, we haven't been tough enough. Maybe we're too good for our own good."

"When we play well, we're like Barnum & Bailey's Traveling Baseball Show. We're the best show on earth. But we can also play miserably, like we did in the seventh game of the playoffs, and I include myself in there. Why did we play that way? It comes down to toughness."

A team with real pride would sure want to win, especially after the way the Mets curled up in Dodger laps like kittens in game seven of the playoffs. When the Mets won the World Series in 1986, they fought with the opposition all the time. Since then, even with almost two hundred more victories, they have fought much too often with each other.

I think the Mets will win the World Series this season. I think they have to win; the Mets are smart enough to know that if they don't, they will be remembered as a famous team that had everything except enough heart. And championships.

But it will not be easy for them. See, the New York Mets get confused sometimes. The old baseball adage is supposed to be, "You can never have enough pitching."

Not bitching. ☐



# Meanwhile Back At The Ranch.

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#### STRAY COOKING TIPS

1. If you're concerned about fat, check the "Skinnyest Sir" below. 2. Great marinades come disguised as vinaigrette, yogurt or red wine.
3. Leftover steak is the ultimate cold cut.

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You don't have to drive 300 miles to grandma's house just to have roast beef. Ask any microwave cookbook. About 20 minutes a pound is all it takes. Regular ovens can do it in about 30 minutes a pound. And leaner roasts cook faster. Which leaves you with plenty of time to catch grandma after dinner.

#### THE GREATNESS OF SMALLNESS

The sirloin that touched both ends of the plate has been fajita'd and it's been tossed. It's been stir-fried and it's been skewered. Because small amounts of beef are hugely interesting.

Figures are for 3-ounce servings, cooked and trimmed.  
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Source: USDA Handbook No. 8

**ROUND TIP**  
6 1/4 gms total fat  
1 gms sat fat  
162 calories

**TOPLOIN**  
7 1/2 gms total fat  
1 1/2 gms sat fat  
172 calories

**TOPROAST**  
5 1/2 gms total fat  
1 1/2 gms sat fat  
162 calories

**EYE OF ROUND**  
5 1/2 gms total fat  
1 gms sat fat  
155 calories

**TENDERLOIN**  
7 1/2 gms total fat  
3 1/2 gms sat fat  
174 calories

**SIRLOIN**  
7 1/2 gms total fat  
3 1/2 gms sat fat  
174 calories





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FOR MEN	North Caldwell, NJ
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### Active Health

# What's the Buzz?

By John Poppy

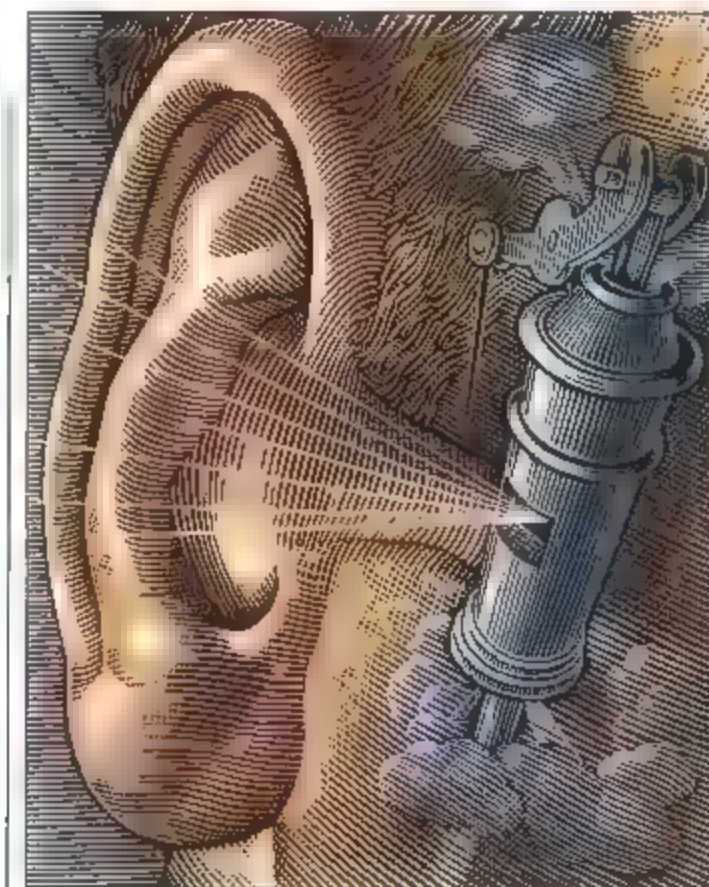
**I**F JULIA HADN'T PATTED ME, I would have slept on while the Casio watch two feet from my ear beeped itself out. When one of those things goes off in a theater, you know the designers made the alarm shrill enough to wake deep sleepers, if not the dead. On this first of several mornings that it didn't wake me, I figured within a few seconds that I knew why. The vehement chirp from the watch was drowned out by a screech, several octaves above middle C, inside my head.

The name for it is tinnitus, a perception of sound that has no source outside you. I had noticed something like it from time to time before, even apart from the normal ringing in my ears that I'd get from gunshots, machinery racket, and construction clatter. Most people occasionally hear slight ringing, buzzing, or other sounds from inside that are, according to ear specialists, nothing to worry about. This was not slight. Over the next few days the noise, razor-thin and loud enough to make me a bit dizzy, began affecting me like a crank caller who wouldn't quit dialing.

Then both ears got stuffed up. No amount of swallowing or yawning could clear them of a pressure close to pain. As it muffled competing sounds from outside, the new pressure exaggerated the tinnitus. A week passed. Two. I tried a decongestant, reluctantly. It didn't help. There was no sign that the nuisances knew they had been invited to leave.

After a lifetime of casually feeling healthy, the good body wasn't coping well with this situation. I felt strange. Day by day I pushed through a membrane of unreality, as if the CIA were slipping vodka into the water supply. Finally, tired of it and curious to know what was going on, I called the Department of Otolaryngology at the University of California medical school in San

John Poppy writes this column monthly for Esquire.



**If your ears are ringing, the problem might be a virus, high cholesterol, or even stress**

Francisco and made a date with Robert Schindler, the vice-chairman there.

Here is what I learned in those weeks: if you hear noises and your ears aren't as good as they used to be, for most practical purposes, what's done is done. Preventing damage in the first place makes far better sense than hoping to fix it later. Of course, there are dramatic operations—tubes, implants, and whatnot.

But for most of us, the prospect is live with it.

"We figure 30 to 50 percent of the people in this country have tinnitus at one time or another—probably," Schindler said. "The figures aren't precise because a lot of people who get it don't report it." Even at the low end,

that could be 72 million people. Federal surveys estimate that it is severe for 7.2 million. About 2.1 million people in the U.S., Schindler figures, "have real problems hearing what's going on around them," and about 300,000 are so profoundly deaf that no hearing aid can help.

Schindler is a tall, strong-looking man in his forties who speaks with the clarity of a professor who intends to be heard. In the examining room he took notes. How loud is the tinnitus on a scale of one to ten? ("Three or four, if your voice is a ten," I said.) How's your cholesterol? (Okay.) Allergies? (No.) Medications? (None.) He looked into both ears with a light and microscope.

Then he set a tuning fork vibrating. He touched it to the bone behind my right ear, then held it a few inches out. "Is that louder on the bone or in the air?" he asked. (In the air.) Same with the left.

"Now open your mouth." He held the tuning fork to a top front tooth. "Louder in one ear than the other?" (No.) After some balance tests, we moved to his office for explanations.

"Both your symptoms come from the hearing organ in your inner ear, the cochlea," Schindler declared.

"Both?" I asked, surprised to hear that the pressure was not where I thought I felt it, at the eardrum. He figured we'd better review the anatomy.

The middle ear is an air space, a chamber hollowed out of bone behind the eardrum. It contains three tiny, movable bones—malleus, incus, and stapes



(pronounced *staypees*)—that transmit vibrations from the eardrum to the inner ear. Pressure in the middle ear usually comes from fluid backed up in the eustachian tube that runs down to the back of the nose, often because of a cold or an allergy. “We can usually get the tube open with antihistamines and decongestants,” Schindler said. “Until we do, the fluid bulges the eardrum and keeps it from moving normally. Yours moves the way it should.”

“Remember the tuning fork? You heard it better in the air than through your mastoid bone. That told me the problem was not in the sound-conducting air space of the middle ear, but in the sound-processing mechanisms of the inner ear—bone conduction sends impulses straight to the inner ear. The tooth test confirmed that.”

What had swelled my cochlea? A virus, he figured, since I reported no allergies or hits to the head. Antihistamines and decongestants don't reduce viral inflammations. If he thought the swelling would hurt my hearing seriously, he would attack it with steroids. He didn't. The symptoms would probably last four to six weeks, then gradually fade—the swelling, that is. “Now that you have the tinnitus, you'll always have it,” he said. “It may drop to the background level you had before, or a little louder, since a few more hair cells may be

damaged now.”

Ah, the hair cells. These tiny sound sensors are the mystery at the heart of the ear.

The inner ear contains fluid. Nicknamed the labyrinth for its maze of canals, it has two divisions: the cochlea (so named because it curls like a snail shell) for hearing, and the vestibular apparatus for balance. “Your swelling does not extend to the balance organs,” Schindler assured me. “If it did, you'd be having vertigo.” There I was lucky. My mild dizziness was nothing compared with the terrifying hallucinations of motion that come from troubles in the vestibular apparatus.

Deep within the cochlea, the hair cells—between thirteen thousand and twenty-five thousand of them, according to various estimates—extend in rows for two and a half turns in a fluid-filled duct about an inch and a quarter long. When the stapes bone vibrates, it sets up waves in the fluid, and the hair cells undulate like kelp. In some unknown manner, they convert motion into electrical impulses that travel along the auditory nerve to the brain.

“The auditory hair cells are tuned much like a piano,” Schindler said. Those for the highest-frequency notes are down at the base of the cochlea, and those for low are at the top. Human hearing extends from about twenty-thousand cycles per second at the

high end to twenty at the low end—the range that many good audio components claim to reproduce. You don't need the full range to understand speech: three hundred to three thousand cycles will do.

Physical assault (a loud noise, a blow to the head) can make the fluid ripple so violently that hair cells end up tangled, or bruised, or uprooted—killed.

Rather like a rheostat brightening and dimming a light, healthy hair cells adjust the current going into the nerve. Imagine that the light won't get brighter no matter how far you turn the rheostat—that corresponds to deafness. If you can never dim it, that is tinnitus. Hair cells that have lost their sensitivity to outside sounds can continue sending electrical impulses up the hearing nerve; the brain has no choice but to interpret them as sound.

Besides physical trauma, the causes of tinnitus include infections (my virus), diseases that restrict blood vessels and thus the hair cells' supply of nutrients (high cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes), and chemicals. Antibiotics such as neomycin and streptomycin are toxic to hair cells. Aspirin increases noise in the auditory nerve. Caffeine and nicotine—for that matter, all stimulants, including chocolate—rile up hair cells. Moderate amounts of alcohol can hurt or help; it is unpredictable. The

noise will quiet down within a few days or weeks after you stop using the chemical, if any, that did it. Gin and tonics are another matter: quinine, a prime offender, accumulates in the inner ear and can cause permanent damage. Growths on a hearing nerve may cause tinnitus. “What's wonderful about your symptom is that you have it in both ears,” Schindler remarked. “A tumor would get you on one side or the other.”

Many of the insults that can cause tinnitus also damage hearing. Schindler said, “Many people start noticing some hearing loss in their forties—although with rock and heavy-metal music, many are losing it in their teens. A lot of that comes from sheer wear and tear—noise pollution. Men have been worse off than women, historically, but I don't think that has anything to do with fundamental sex differences. We collected our statistics in a period when more men than women went out to work in loud places; now we're starting to see women with the same problems.

“Our ears were never made for the assault of the Industrial Revolution. Think of people for whom the loudest noise is a thunderclap or a tree falling. I've seen studies that compare African tribesmen with urban Western Europeans and find that the very old Africans can hear much, much better than younger Europeans.”

Things can go wrong with your eardrums, the three little bones, and the nerves. But the main victims are hair cells. The high frequencies, in the base of the cochlea, go first. The highest note on a piano, four octaves above middle C, is somewhere around four thousand cycles per second. “We generally see the first damage in that octave,” Schindler said. “Losing it there can affect your ability to understand what people are saying.” The reason is that you'll have trouble hearing consonants.

In one test that afternoon, the audiologist in Schindler's office, Toni Will, had me listen to a list of words through a headphone on one ear at a time and repeat them. “Hat,” she said, “wife, raise, live, voice, shack, soap...” The words were loaded with consonants, which are higher-frequency sounds than vowels. “They're what you need to understand speech,” she explained. “Vowels are not only lower in pitch, they carry more energy, so they come through more strongly. If you don't hear consonants clearly, the result is a sort of mumble. *Size* can sound like *side*. A word people often miss is *yes*.” I missed one word—no big deal. Background noise—at a restaurant or party, say—is lower in pitch than clear speech, so it competes with your better low-frequency hearing.

“The word on tinnitus is management,

not cure,” Schindler said. People usually learn to live with it when the brain starts to ignore the meaningless stream of nerve impulses coming in from the hair cells.

Meanwhile, he suggested guarding against loud noises; in both tinnitus and hearing loss, they are his number-one villain. Number two is stress: it releases chemicals like adrenaline, which constrict blood vessels. From there on, do what you would normally do for your general health: keep fat levels and blood pressure down, take vitamin C if you believe in it. Tinnitus sometimes responds to vitamin B<sub>3</sub> (niacin), a vasodilator that may help to improve inner ear circulation.

There may be little point in trying to persuade teenagers to turn down the music and the motors. They think they're indestructible. But an adult can think about how many hair cells he or she is mowing down, and act rationally.

Armed with information, not pills, I did what I could about my stress, to the point of meditating and visualizing healthy little cochleas. I switched from black tea to herb tea to cut out caffeine, bought some niacin, and went so far as to put on shooters' earmuffs before starting up a power saw or dumping bottles into the recycling barrel. I'm waiting to hear a difference, not feeling indestructible anymore. ■

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10 mg "tar," 0.8 mg nicotine—Lights 100's Soft: 11 mg "tar," 0.8 mg nicotine.  
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# Smart Money

A PROFESSIONAL'S GUIDE TO FINANCIAL MATTERS

**I do not count myself** among those who think that nothing of value comes from France that you can't eat, drink, or date. As a matter of fact, the French have for centuries practiced an inelegant but powerful means of passing houses from one generation to another that I believe could be altered to serve younger Americans in the way that social security has underwritten the quality of life of their grandparents.

I first heard about the ancient transaction called *viager* from my old friend Marie-Paul, who was lucky enough to have been born in one of the foothill villages of the French Pyrenees. Several times a week Marie-Paul paid visits to an elderly widow who, according to the ways of *viager*, lived in what would eventually be Marie-Paul's house—as soon as the old lady died. Under *viager* the buyer—usually a younger person who can't afford the house outright—agrees to pay the seller of the home a set amount of money each year for the rest of the seller's life. If the parties agree that the house is worth, say, 100,000 francs, and then agree to the touchier assumption that the seller will live another five years, then the buyer might agree to pay 20,000 francs a year for life. If the seller dies in two years, the young buyer gets a hell of a deal. If the seller lives for twenty years, the buyer gets burned.

Needless to say, *viager* has for generations inspired the Gallic craving for intrigue and *scandale*. Every time Marie-Paul would bring a basket of food to the little old lady who lived in her house, the lady would pause before digging in. "C'est poison?" she would inquire with a twinkle in her eye. More than a few films and short stories have involved *viager* murders, but the fact is that the classic *viager* deal involves not only a young person



THE INVESTOR

## Till Death Does Its Part

BY DONALD R. KATZ

planning for the future, but a seller who tends to be elderly, often quite lonely, and possessed of a house, no income, few remaining friends, and no nearby relatives to depend upon. The largely provincial economic custom inspires an intergenerational communitarianism powerful enough to move many sellers to do it simply because they want somebody to care about them—however ambivalently. It is said that Charles de Gaulle himself acquired his first house through *viager*—so

how could it be half bad?

Until quite recently, Americans have had access to nothing remotely resembling a *viager* equity transfer. What we do have is a massive logjam of elderly people who own homes free and clear but don't have enough cash flow to support themselves. We also have the better part of an entire generation of younger people who aspire to live in the kinds of houses now occupied by the elderly but can't begin to afford them. An astonishing number of

older Americans—three of four people over sixty-five—own their own homes, and a tremendous majority of them have paid off their mortgages.

Readers of the ever-helpful short bits that adorn the Smart Money section might recall news of a government pilot program that seeks to promote "reverse

**Under viager,  
if the seller dies  
in two years,  
the buyer gets one  
hell of a deal.**

mortgages" or "home equity conversion mortgages." These bank loans allow older people to liquefy their calcified home equity by having a bank pay them a monthly sum that will be toted up along with the interest until the house is sold or the inhabitant dies. Actuaries and life-expectancy tables figure heavily in a bank's analysis of the payment levels, and until the new pilot program began, a person who lived too long—past the point where the bank has paid out the equity built up in the house—would have to surrender his or her home.

The pilot program is really designed as an insurance system that will kick in to protect lenders if a borrower manages to beat the reaper. The program covers different kinds of payment schemes from monthly outlays to lines of credit, you have to be sixty-two to apply. But all in all, with only 2,500 mortgages being offered under the pilot, the whole thing can barely be considered a start. Plenty of people need to draw cash out of their homes late in life, but beyond the reverse-mortgage program's limited size, it fails to address the dire need for a much more fundamental reallocation of housing



# Smart Money

stock My local paper runs a Sunday real estate feature that profiles a single metropolitan community, and every week the stats reveal median house prices approaching \$300,000 and median income levels of around \$30,000. What's wrong with these figures?

Inflated housing costs and older people staying put in communities once meant for family raising have conspired to turn down-payment hunting into a generational obsession. Add to this the crazy rental rates in

**I like viager, in part because it cuts out the banks and the government.**

densely populated areas, and the fact that fully one quarter of all rental units in the country ban children and another half limit them in some way by age restrictions or other factors, and the problem gets darker.

Something on the order of a viager system needs to be effected soon, because there are signs of a generational conflict that could make the bygone "don't trust anyone over thirty" run-ins look like playing around. The tremendous disparities between the financial capacities of grand-

parents and grandchildren has spawned a new sensibility revealed most emblematically in a *Forbes* cover story last autumn. "The old are getting richer," the writers proclaimed, "at the expense of the young." The piece pointed out that the government spends ten times as much on the elderly as it does on children, though only 12.2 percent of the elderly are poor, compared with 20 percent of the kids. It zeroed in on social security, medicare, and—quite prominently—housing inequities as examples of how a period of national sentimentalism and political mobilization among older people has royally screwed young people over. After reading the piece, I was visited with a strange but vivid daydream of the stately figure of Congressman Claude Pepper being cut adrift on an arctic ice floe by a crowd of cheering young families.

"The simple fact is that the vast majority of those over sixty-five are quite well-off," the *Forbes* manifesto concluded.

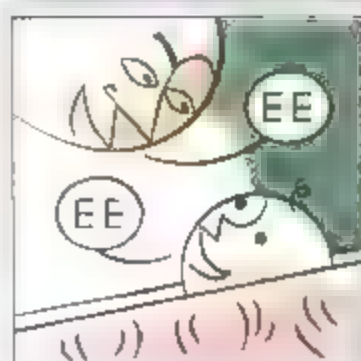
Of course "those over sixty-five"—like "those under forty"—is far from a coherent conception. Plenty of elderly people are widows over seventy-five living in houses they can barely afford, and it is this group that the reverse-mortgage program addresses. To get at the cash in his house, an older person can obviously sell it—but the

available alternative dwellings are often more expensive.

The want of new ideas surrounding the home-equity logjam is subtly connected to psychological impediments peculiar to Americans. Reverse mortgages really pay a healthy sum each year only if you're pretty close to your personal settlement date, as it were. Americans have never been as talented as residents of Hindu, Buddhist, or even Catholic places like France when it comes to contemplating the inevitable. Most seventy-five-year-olds would probably be shocked to find out that they have a 72-percent chance of seeing eighty. We usually extrapolate starting-from-birth life-expectancy numbers when we think of our assumed passage, but once you get up there, the numbers are cheerier. This is bad for reverse-mortgage holders.

I like viager, in part because you tend to win the bet if you live longer. Reverse mortgages—like life-insurance policies—are existential transactions in which you never get to appreciate your windfall. I also like viager because it cuts out the banks and the government (after some sort of guidance and consumer protection legislation is in place), and it creates a nonintermediated financial arrangement between two parties who are, first and foremost, seeking a way of mutually enhancing the quality of their lives. Some lawyers would have to draft a model contract that gets around the difference between the Napoleonic code and common law, and our overdeveloped real estate brokerage industry would probably have to be cut in on some level, but I think all of this can be done. Every Francophile I know has at some time wondered aloud about our lack of a viager system. The only question standing in the way is whether we are individually so distant from one another by now that a process having to do with money cannot possibly be associated with a purpose so cooperative and human in nature. **E**

## FINANCIAL HOTLINE

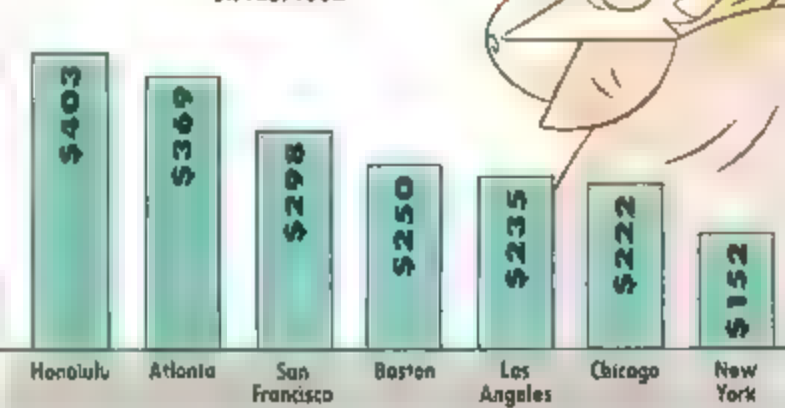


### Sheltered Children

We want to shield our kids from the unpleasant things in life, like taxes, but tax reform has made the job more challenging. About the best way to cope with the recent "kiddie tax" is to buy savings bonds (series EE), an old friend with newfound allure. Interest from savings bonds is exempt from state and local taxes, and the federal taxes don't come due until the bonds mature. Time is right and you can hold off paying until your child turns fourteen, when, according to the new law, the interest starts being taxed at the child's tax rate, not yours. That rate would be 34 percent, the IRS's lowest, unless you have somehow sired an independently wealthy child. Congress has recently added a further tax incentive with the Education Savings Bond. A couple who purchases savings bonds after December 31 ('89) gets a total or partial federal tax exemption (depending on the combined income) if the money is to be spent on college tuition.

## THE ESQUIRE FILE

**Anyone for a Poi McMuffin?**  
Annual per capita spending on fast food







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New York, New York 10023

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across from South Coast Plaza  
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THE BUSINESS TRAVELER

## If He'd Meant Them to Fly...

BY GLENN EICHLER

**R**ight now I'd like every business traveler who could benefit from the use of a laptop computer to take a step forward.

You there. With the magazine. Not so fast.

Laptops have come a long way in the last two years, but if you intend to use one *while traveling*, there are some practical matters to consider. Like weight. You should be as concerned about it as a listing balloonist. A fourteen-pound computer weighs twice as much as a seven-pound computer, but only on your lap. When you're carrying it through airports, the tonnage somehow increases exponentially. I have developed a formula for gauging the consequences of traveling with a heavy laptop: for every pound of computer weight, subtract a year from your life expectancy. Simple, but elegant.

After weight, you've got to deal with power requirements. Several of the more sophisticated laptops require more energy than batteries can provide. (Not that you'll ever be able to avoid lugging the AC adaptor. The longest-lasting batteries, for the simplest laptops, run only four or five hours.) Disk drives also affect weight and power. One-drive computers add less weight and consume less energy than two-drive computers. Ditto for displays: standard, dim LCD displays, which can drive you nuts trying to read them, use far less electricity than beautiful gas-plasma or backlit LCD displays.

Are you beginning to see a pattern yet? If not, let me spell it out: the best computers for traveling are not the best computers for computing. This could change—NEC has introduced a computer called the UltraLite,

which at four-plus pounds manages to be fast and readable, but only for an hour or so, after which the batteries die. The first-generation UltraLite might indeed be the perfect laptop.

Modems are a popular item with laptop owners. Guess what they do? That's right—they add weight and eat power, which is why you should consider a lightweight external modem like the Worldport 2400 or Migent Pocket Modem. Internal modems are far more convenient, but you can leave an external modem home when you don't need it. If modem use is essential, don't assume your hotel room will have a modular jack. Buy a mouthpiece/jack that screws directly into the phone handset, available from Traveling Software (1-800-343-8080), or the Radio Shack kit that lets you tap in via alligator clips. As for a printer, you could buy the four-pound Dicom 150 or the new four-pound Toshiba Express-Writer 301, but you're better off using someone else's—even the hotel's—when you arrive. If you do, PC Computing recommends bringing your printer drivers for Hewlett-Packard LaserJet, Epson FX series, and a generic line printer, along with a flat-ribbon (that is, easy to pack) cable.

Miscellaneous notes: if you're traveling overseas, you're going to have to worry not only about different AC current and different telephone standards for the modem, but having your receipt on hand to prove to customs that you're not trying to bring in a new high-tech item duty free. Remember too that bringing a data transfer program means packing another cable. Think about insurance. And never let them X-ray your magnetic disks.

Ultimately, my advice is that if you want to work on the plane, get a lightweight, if regrettably slow, laptop. If you want to do presentations and share data and calculate huge spreadsheets, then arrange for a powerful computer to be waiting at the hotel or field office, and find a good detective novel for the flight. ☐

## We Don' Need No Stinkin' Ashtray

A marketing test begun last summer may trigger the next great wave of smoker-nonsmoker segregation. Avis has been offering nonsmoker-only cars at Reno's Cannon International Airport—and the program is so successful that Avis has doubled the size of the nonsmoking fleet and is considering offering nonsmoking cars in other cities.

## And Here's a Little Something for Your Ulcer

Beginning in May, the Transportation Department will offer extra pay to air-traffic controllers, inspectors, and technicians working in high-density, high-stress cities. Personnel in Chicago and New York will receive "allowances" of up to 20 percent over basic pay as part of a five-year test aimed at easing controller shortages in those cities.

## Single Floor or Double?

At press time, Hong Kong was suffering through a spell of hotel overbooking so bad that guests were camping out in the lobby of the Hong Kong Hilton. The situation may have eased by the time you read this. Or not.

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## INSURANCE

### The Prospects for Single Life in the 1990s

**T**he news about single-premium life insurance isn't too bad, as bad news goes. With its new tax correction bill, Congress has narrowed the single-premium tax loophole that was so capacious even the insurance lobby seemed relieved to see it go. Under the generous old provisions, single-premium was treated like any other form of life insurance in that you didn't have to pay income tax on the money you borrowed against the cash value of the policy, even though these so-called loans never had to be paid back.

No one got too exercised about this provision when it was applied to policies that slowly built up cash value over years of premium paying. But with single-premium, you made one large payment and then you could immediately start "borrowing" against the cash value, which was accruing tax-free at,

say, 8 percent a year. You paid no tax on the "loan" and usually no interest to the insurer, since typically you were borrowing against the interest portion of the cash value, not the principal. In the shelter-scarce years after the '86 tax reform, single-premium was marketed by insurance companies and brokerage houses as something much sexier than insurance, no less than the cleverest way of guaranteeing a tax-free stream of income. And now, no more.

Under the new regulations, if a policy's premiums exceed the maximum amount allowed for a "seven pay" policy (roughly speaking, a policy with seven or more annual premium payments), the policy is classified as a modified endowment. As the holder of such a policy, you are subject to a 10-percent tax penalty if you borrow against the increase in the cash value of the policy before you reach that

landmark age of fifty-nine and a half. The money is taxed by the feds no matter when you make the withdrawal, the same as with an annuity.

As with any insurance policy, you can still borrow against the cash value of the principal without incurring any tax liability. In this case, typically, you would pay interest to the insurance company ("the net cost of borrowing"), this being the compensation for reducing the amount of money the company has available for investment.

The good news in all this tinkering is that even though single-premium life is suddenly less attractive as a tax shelter, it's as good an insurance value as it ever was. Still, as with any life insurance, it's a better deal for people who are less interested in making money than in giving it away, intelligently. The investment portion of the policy appreciates tax-free as long as the money ultimately passes to the beneficiaries. If you are looking for a safe investment that guarantees the principal, compare the 8 percent that a CD would pay (after taxes, that's more like 5.6 percent) to the 8.45 percent and 8.25 percent your money would be earning at Northwestern Mutual Life and Metropolitan Life, respectively.

Of course, for single-premium life insurance to make sense, you have to be certain that you won't need to touch any of the money until you are fifty-nine and a half. To reap the full tax advantages of the policy, you'll have to die without touching a penny of it, but every investment has its downside.

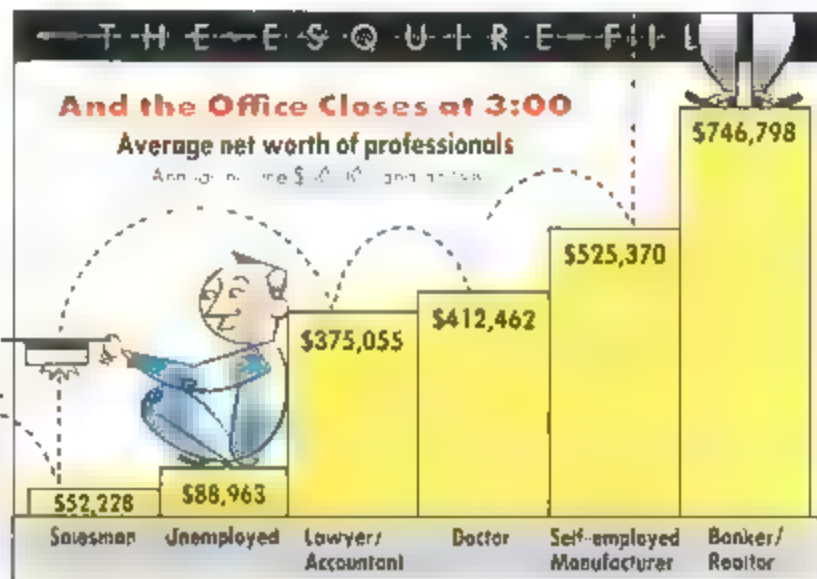
James Hunt, an actuary and a board member of NICO (National Insurance Consumer Organization), has written an expert ninety-four-page tip book on how to save money on life insurance entitled, as it happens, *How to Save Money on Life Insurance*. To order it, send a check for \$11.95 to NICO, 121 North Payne Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22314. **E**

## FINANCIAL HOTLINE



### Dining on Cheap Plastic

It's no secret that restaurants have been known to barter meal vouchers for goods and services. Sometimes these vouchers made their way to the general public via middlemen, but the practice was limited, coupon books not being the last word on how to impress a dinner date. But the clever middlemen have turned their coupon books into plastic cards and are now doing a serious business. The IGT card fetches you a 25-percent discount at 1,200 different restaurants (call 800-4-IGT-USA for information), as well as at more than four hundred retailers, hotels, and car-rental agencies. In the year and a half that the IGT card has been available to individuals, membership has grown by five thousand a month. The newest entry, the ACT card (Advantage Charge Trading Corporation; 212-779-SAVE) has been in business less than a year, offering a 20-percent "across the board" discount—food, alcohol, tip, and taxes.



HUGO BOSS FASHIONS, 40 WEST 57 STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10019 PHOTO, BOB KRIEGER



**BOSS**  
HUGO BOSS



A photograph showing a man in a white shirt and tie sitting at a desk, writing in a notebook. A woman in a white shirt is standing behind him, looking at his work. The desk is cluttered with papers, a lamp, and other items. The scene appears to be in a home or office setting.

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I've been a mole at the heart of corporate capitalism for several years now, and looking backward, it concerns me that readers might think I'm a negative kind of guy. It's understandable. Fear, paranoia, the limitations of loyalty, the power of deceit, insane managers who victimize the workplace, jerks of all shades and descriptions—these have been my meat since I fell off the freedom train and landed here. My gorge is usually up and rising, I admit it. Beyond that, however, I view myself as a captain of positivity.

I love the smell of coffee in the morning. It smells like victory.

I love the software I get, whether I need it or not. Last week I got a gonzo graphics package, an updated mouse, and an international data base. They're great!

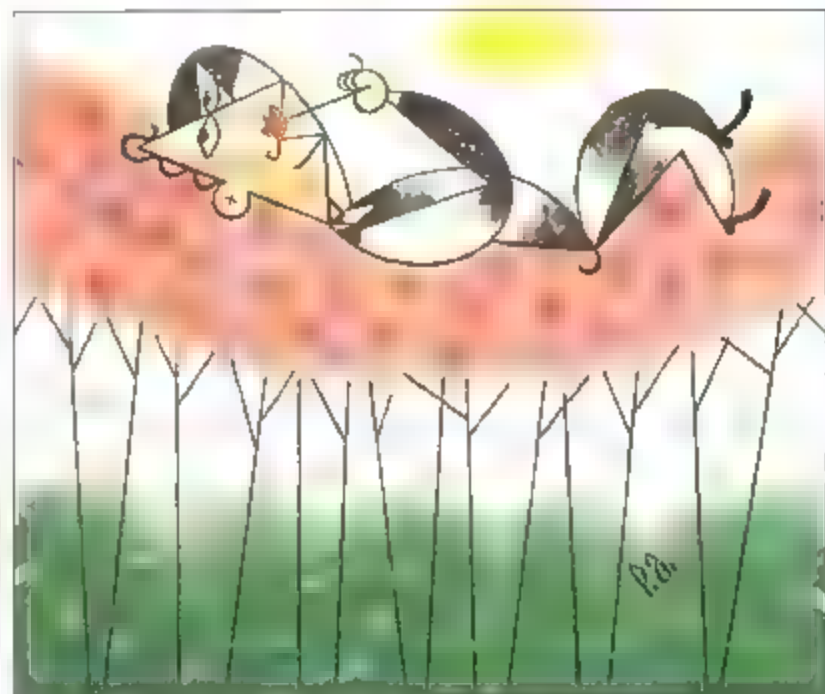
I love my phone. Last week I got a call from a guy conducting a poll "What kind of military hardware magazine would best suit your professional needs?" I hung up. It felt good.

Sometimes it's someone who has to clear something with me, before it gets implemented. Sure, it's just a tiny bit of obscurity, but it's mine! And I always reward it, ladies and gentlemen. I love that about myself.

Once a month I love to open my paycheck and, you know, stare at it for a while, and remember what this document might have looked like in 1980. Do the words *four figures* have any resonance for you?

I love those precious moments of situational intimacy. After a high torque meeting, the job well done and over, and you find yourself hanging out in the boardroom for a no-agenda chat with the chairman and a couple of other senior guys. At the pineapple of power, and comfortable there, talking box scores. At such times, a man could convince himself that clean living does sometimes pay off with a visit to the center of the universe. It's nice there.

I also love the day when my bonus check arrives. Not that it's



THE STRATEGIST

## Having a Nice Day

BY STANLEY BING

an overwhelming sum. It isn't. I still love to open it and, you know, stare at it for a while.

I love the unexpected intrusion of beauty. Last autumn I attended our strategic-planning confab in downtown Massachusetts. For some reason, I arrived early. Rented my Taurus. Drove to the plush retirement community masquerading as a conference center. The first event, drinks at 6:00 P.M., was hours away. This was unique. Nowhere to go. Nobody to see. I took a drive. The leaves were red and gold and orange; a rumbling torrent of Waylon and Willie pounded from my stereo, and no one knew where I was, not even me. I got out of my car and took a walk. Couldn't think of a thing to think. Just smelled nature stuff. Got back to my room to find an executive attaché case embossed with my name. On it

was a note that read, "Welcome to Excellence." In all, one of the happiest days of my life.

Serenity isn't all, of course. That evening, after nine hours of Scotch and beer, singing myself hoarse with the good guys down at the sports bar, I reeled back to my room and spent the rest of the night down on my knees in my duplex bathroom, wondering if this is how Jim felt on that final night. How many times in this life can a man achieve that level of craziness and get paid for it?

Once a month my expense check comes in from Accounting. Sure, it's cash I've already spent on stuff long forgotten. But given my level of food ingestion, car rental, and associated bushwa, it usually represents a tidy chunk. I love to open it and, you know, stare at it for a while.

I love the whole Christmas season, when you can go out for

lunch and come back merry to the point of incoherence; and indolent summer Fridays, when the only guys who punish lack of productivity are heading to the beach in their company Acuras.

And the big days. One Friday: I complete a breakfast board-

**It concerns me that readers might think I'm a negative kind of guy.**

room presentation on the cost of nonconformance to requirements, which generates inchoate murmurs and the call for a follow-up report (Yes!), at 11:00, the chairman has his meeting with security analysts, for which I helped prepare him, and not once is the word *undervalued* mentioned, lunch with Wineum, Shineum Blather, our ad agency, the content of which I cannot remember, an hour spent with the Acquisitions Task Force, where decisions are made that could engorge the size of our revenue base and cost thousands of innocent people their jobs; annual report numbers reiterated on deadline during typical bogus conference call with national sales staff (good squawk box), at 5:00, crisis blasts in by fax from Solid Fuel Group needing data on why pollution is good; half hour of electronic paper shuffling, leading to one brief slam-and-run with the chairman and out.

And finally, yes, I love that last martini of the week, all sweaty and frosty. My train awaits crosstown, huffing in the station. Let it wait. The gin is cold. The olives are salty. Just outside the bar, my skyscraper rears up, a smattering of fluorescent lights glimmering in the workaholic twilight. I loosen my wing tips, take an unfettered breath, look out the window and, you know, stare at it for a while.

Now, that's what I call living. Or something very much like it. **E**

"Clothes may make the man. I prefer to see what's in his liquor cabinet."



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# The laughter.





# Man Power

## Harvey Rosenfield

Harvey Rosenfield is a 40-year-old lawyer from New York City who has become a household name in the insurance industry. He is the founder of the group, which has transformed a mol-dering public anger about high insurance rates into a firestorm of popular protest. Workaholic, energetic, imaginative, tactician, indefatigable, and a bit of a nutcase, Rosenfield, with his band of merry men and women, demonstrated that a few million words of conviction can occasionally outmatch a \$70-million war chest of business-as-usual.

## Marc Chiat

My life is already messed up, fifteen-year-old Danny Santoro told the camera in a now-famous public-service message. My advice to young kids is just don't get into it. Santoro was talking about gang life, which has sucked up a generation of teenagers in South Central Los Angeles. Two weeks later he was gunned down in a drive-by shoot-out. The man behind the stark, prophetic film is thirty-one-year-old filmmaker Marc Chiat, son of advertising legend Jay Chiat. Santoro in his kick-ass performance is a real-life hero.

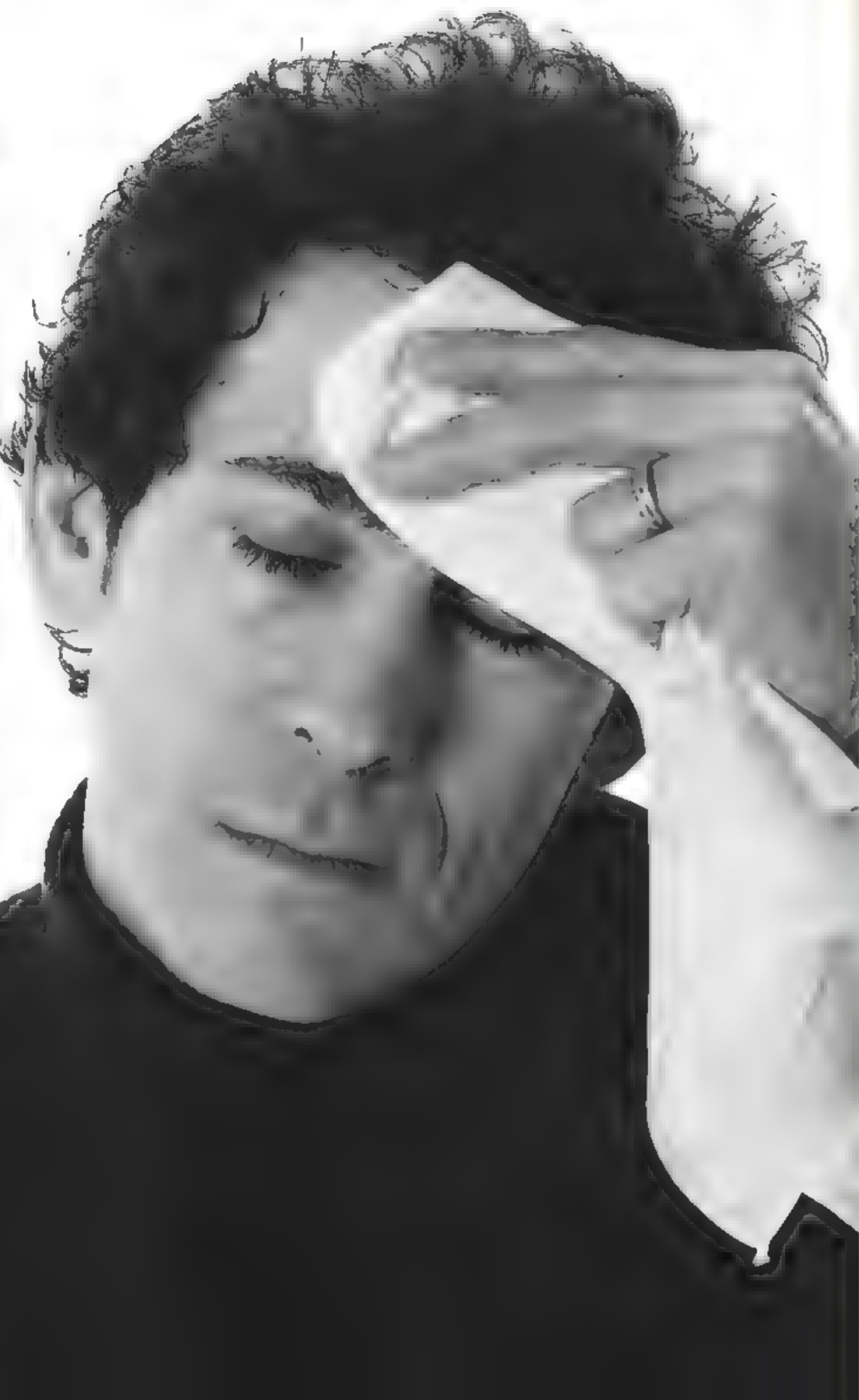




## Stephen Schneider

*Scientist*

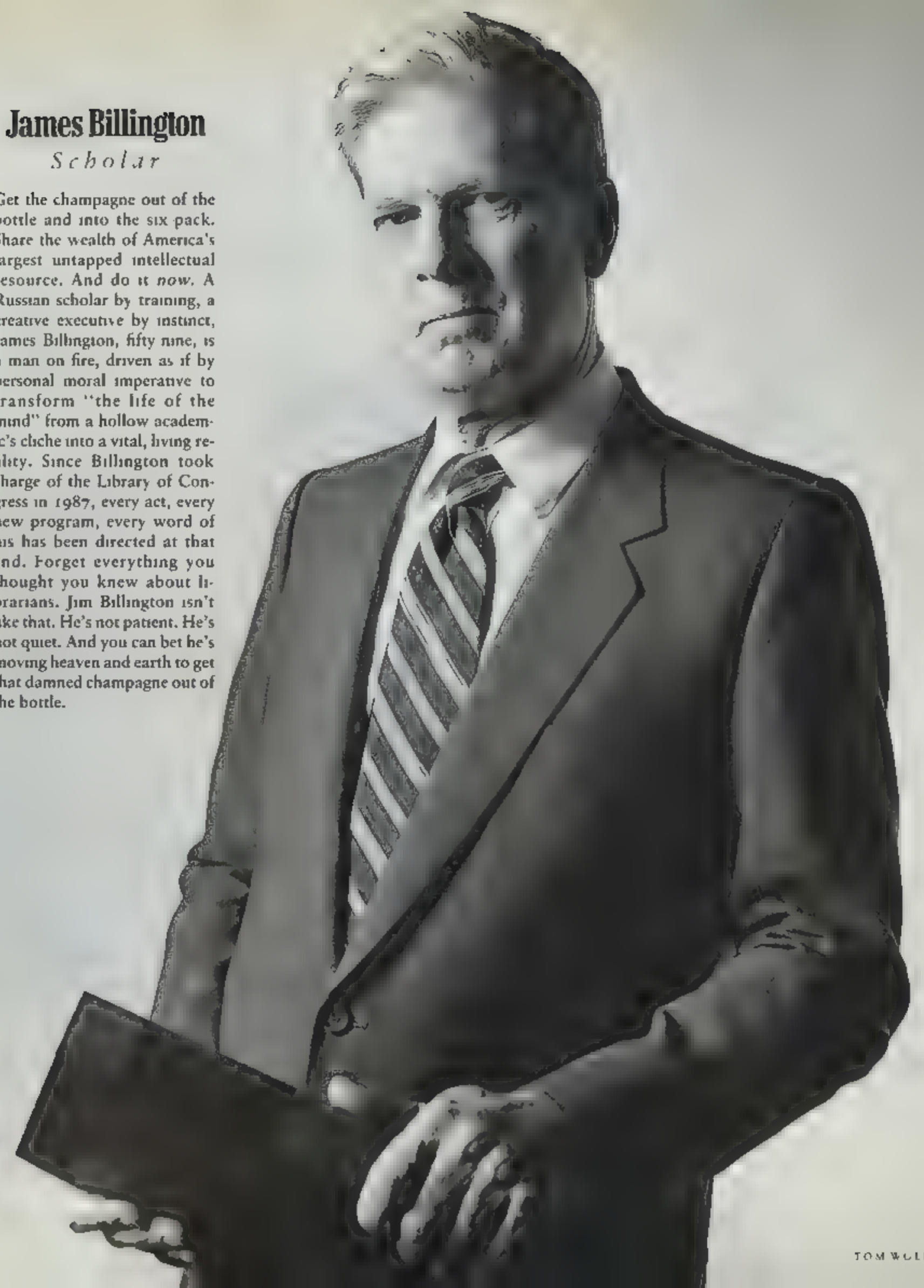
The business card says he's head of Interdisciplinary Climate Systems at the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colorado. What Stephen Schneider really is, he says, is an idea broker. Right now he's trying to bring together a flock of blue-ribbon economists, politicians, and scientists to develop a plan for saving the globe from the worst consequences of the greenhouse effect. Schneider's idea is for the United States and the Soviet Union to cut defense spending by 50 percent over the next twenty years, and to use the money to modernize plants to make industry in both countries more energy-efficient. The goal: slow the heating of the planet, thereby buying time to search for alternate energy sources and to find ways of mitigating the impact of unprecedented environmental change. And if we don't do something this radical? You definitely don't want to hear that forecast.



## James Billington

*Scholar*

Get the champagne out of the bottle and into the six pack. Share the wealth of America's largest untapped intellectual resource. And do it *now*. A Russian scholar by training, a creative executive by instinct, James Billington, fifty nine, is a man on fire, driven as if by personal moral imperative to transform "the life of the mind" from a hollow academic's cliché into a vital, living reality. Since Billington took charge of the Library of Congress in 1987, every act, every new program, every word of his has been directed at that end. Forget everything you thought you knew about librarians. Jim Billington isn't like that. He's not patient. He's not quiet. And you can bet he's moving heaven and earth to get that damned champagne out of the bottle.





If you're concerned  
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**Esquire**  
APRIL 1988

# THE PASSIVE- AGGRESSIVE MALE

Gentlemen: Ever wonder why you're driving people crazy?

THESE ARE SOME OF THE THINGS that a passive-aggressive man says:

- ▶ "Nothing. I'm just thinking."
- ▶ "No, why do you ask?"
- ▶ "Angry?"
- ▶ "I don't hate it."
- ▶ "I won't stop you."
- ▶ "What's the problem?"

THESE ARE SOME OF THE THINGS that a passive-aggressive man does.

- ▶ Has a new lock put on the front door and forgets to give his wife the key.
- ▶ Calls an early staff meeting and shows up forty minutes late.
- ▶ Talks on the phone for an hour when he knows that his girlfriend is trying to call.

▶ Hears about passive-aggression and decides that it doesn't apply to him

THESE ARE SOME OF THE THINGS that a passive-aggressive man can find tough

- ▶ Meeting deadlines.
- ▶ Firing people
- ▶ Getting angry
- ▶ Saying no.

THIS IS WHAT a passive-aggressive man fears

- ▶ Himself

SO LET'S TALK about my friend Moe \*

Moe is utterly charming, but Moe is never in one place for long. He moves through

his life like a knight on a chessboard—two steps forward and one step to the side, the one step to the side always the tricky one, to avoid the closeness. Closeness is very hard for Moe. He's got a lot to hide.

Moe is torty and single. Sex has never been a problem for him, but talking to women always has. Moe has slept with every kind of woman they make, but his elusiveness tends to have a leveling effect on them. Otherwise intelligent women date

\* Yes, the choice of the pseudonym for the composite character of Moe, no less than for those of Larry, Curly, Stan, and Ollie (which follow), can undoubtedly be construed as a passive-aggressive act.

BY LISA GRUNWALD



him and find themselves saying things like, "A penny for your thoughts." They all end up convinced that if they'd just been somehow different, they could have made him "open up," another phrase they never used before. They feel as if they've failed.

Moe is a good friend, but he is a classic

you marry me." He thought that getting closer had to mean getting married. She thought it meant him tailing backward, trusting that she'd be there.

Her call for "intimacy" (a word he detested) were getting on his nerves. For a week he tried to steel himself and have the Big Talk. But he didn't want to hurt her, and he didn't want her to hate him. Then she got the flu—a bad stomach flu—and didn't want to see him until she was feeling better.

Three days later, Larry had mellowed a bit, and he was wondering whether maybe they could work it out somehow. The plan was that he would cook dinner for her—something bland, like pasta.

So Lucy sat in the living room while Larry pattered in her kitchen. He hummed and buzzed merrily, dumping, oh, a little cayenne

pepper, and hmm, a little garlic salt, a few onions, and virtually her whole spice rack into the sauce. The sauce was so hot that it could have been used to kill large pests.

She took a bite of the pasta.

"What is it?" she said. "Do you want to break up?"

And he hadn't known until that moment how much he still wanted out.

Like a lot of the terms that have gotten borrowed from shrinks—*paranoid*, *schizo*, *manic*, *psycho*—*passive-aggressive* can take on a sort of one-size-fits-all frustrations shape. The textbook passive aggression is a personality disorder. So it's not a disease, like schizophrenia, with rigorous boundaries and understood treatment. Among the official symptoms there are plenty of traits: forgetfulness, tardiness, stubbornness, to name a few—that appear in nonneurotics too. Doctors seem to agree that it is rare to find someone who's passive-aggressive in every aspect of his life. So like greed and bad cholesterol and other signs of the times, a passive-aggression problem is a matter of degree.

On the tamest end of the spectrum, passive-aggression can really be thought of as politics: you say one thing and mean another. When George Bush turned to Michael Dukakis during the second debate and told him how much he admired his family's closeness and how it had led him to want to use the Bush family in his own campaign, the outward effect was magnanimous. The subtext was "Hey look, you dwarf, I'll show you family. I'm killing you in the polls."

Of course, professional situations call for this kind of politics all the time. To acknowledge every frustration at work would not just be dumb but obnoxious—and arguably far more damaging than some quiet sedition and well-placed quips. There is that old adage about attracting more flies with honey. A

#### THE PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE MAN IN ACTION (AND INACTION)

### SITUATION 1

Your archival at the office gets promoted.

#### PASSIVE RESPONSE

You say, "That's great, pal," and pledge to work with him.

#### AGGRESSIVE RESPONSE

You carve your initials into his new credenza and quit.

#### PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE RESPONSE

You say, "That's great, pal," but tell everyone else he's been kicked upstairs and you're happy he'll finally have time with his kids.

passive-aggressive "Why can't women understand baseball?" he asked (rhetorically) over Sunday brunch the other day. There was a table of maybe eight people, all men except his girlfriend and me. "Men don't want to talk about the game," Moe went on happily. "You can watch a game that goes into extra innings with a guy and never say two words to him. Women are always asking whether Lenny Dykstra's married."

All the guys laughed. But I saw the look on his girlfriend's face. In the incredibly short space between two sips of his bloody mary, Moe had managed to

1. Make himself a victim
2. Blame it on his girl friend.
3. Make her feel ridiculous.
4. Look swell to the guys at her expense.

I THINK I SHOULD PAUSE at this point to say that I'm not writing this story because I want to pick on Moe. At times it will seem as if I'm picking on Moe, because a passive-aggressive caught in the act is not such a handsome sight.

But passive aggression is bigger than Moe.

It's at least as big as Moe and Larry.

Larry is thirty-two. He was born to be used in a piece like this.

It is hard to believe that Larry didn't know what he was doing. There was a gap between his girlfriend and him the size of Asia Minor, but he thought it was just the distance between "I love you" and "Will

CHANCES ARE that if you've heard the word *passive-aggressive*, you've thought it was a put-down. As a popular epithet, *passive-aggressive* has become the male chauvinist pig of the Eighties, and sometimes it's simply used as a synonym for *schmuck*. Consider: A woman gets into bed wanting to make love to her husband. He's out for the count, he's snoring. In the morning, she accuses him of using sleep as a means of escape. She calls him a passive aggressive. He may be a passive aggressive. He may also have needed a nap.

*Passive-aggressive* sounds a lot like *manic-depressive*, so it's logical to think that it describes behavior that alternates between extremes. That's not what it is. Passive aggressive behavior is both extremes at once: aggressive behavior that hides behind a curtain of passivity.

### SITUATION 2

You've had a fight with your mistress, and she wants to make up by making love.

#### PASSIVE RESPONSE

You break out the Listerine.

#### AGGRESSIVE RESPONSE

You tell her that unlike the other men she's slept with, you're not some guy who can be turned off and on like a windup toy.

#### PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE RESPONSE

You do it, but you're thinking about someone else, and then you fall asleep.

passive demeanor, consciously chosen, can be a ruthless weapon, and it would be ludicrous to suggest that it's always a sign of some hidden problem. It's the *unconscious* use of passivity to mask a *hidden* aggression that gets men into trouble. That's what passive-aggression is, and that's what wreaks all the havoc.



Lisa Grunwald is features editor of Esquire.



## SITUATION 3

Your wife accepts an invitation to have dinner with her ex husband



**PASSIVE RESPONSE**  
You put on a clean shirt



**AGGRESSIVE RESPONSE**

You tell her she can't go, you won't go, but you'd be happy to send a dead fish.



**PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE RESPONSE**

You go, but you come late, and you say you're not hungry.



Employees who work for passive aggressive bosses, women who fall in love with passive-aggressive men, children of passive-aggressive parents, students of passive-aggressive teachers—there is an entire subset of the population that walks around feeling like Ingrid Bergman in *Caslight*. A friend of mine says she knows she's with a passive-aggressive man when she feels that

the seams in her stockings are crooked. According to Dr. David L. Hart, a Jungian who's been in practice for thirty years, "With a passive-aggressive man, you'll always be attacked in very subtle ways, but you won't quite understand why. That can be seriously detrimental to your mental health. The passive-aggressive gets in his job and then, like the squid, he disappears in a cloud of black ink."

Hart has become something of an expert on the topic. Not only has he given seminars at the Jung Society on the passive-aggressive male, but he's a self-confessed out-of-the-closet former passive-aggressive himself. "In my first marriage," he says, "I'd be sitting there innocently, minding my own business, and my wife would be telling everyone, 'He's driving me crazy.' I didn't have the faintest idea what she was talking about."

Dr. Scott Wetzler, a clinical psychologist, says that it's often the "victims" of passive-aggressive men who convince them that they need treatment. "Passive-aggressive men don't walk into the office saying, 'God, I'm so angry,'" Wetzler explains. "They don't know what the problem is. Usually they come in because they're so boggled up at work that it's causing a problem with the boss, or because their wives or girlfriends tell them that they're driving them up the wall."

Of course, the damage is hardly restricted to the frustration that passive-aggressives cause the people who live and work with them. Wetzler recalls one patient whose passive-aggressive traits were so intense that they verged on the suicidal. Wetzler's patient was a diabetic who kept forgetting to take his insulin. Ultimately he went into shock and nearly passed out while driving to a session. Failing to take his medicine was a seemingly passive act that masked a huge self-destructive impulse: an inwardly turned aggression.

In less dramatic ways, passive-aggressive men are hurting themselves all the time. Apart from the trouble they have with

functioning normally in some parts of their lives, they can be so willing to keep the peace that they seem to lack all conviction. Says Hart: "This kind of man can almost cancel himself out. He's not at home in the world, no matter how he seems to act." Dr. Richard W. Firestone, a Manhattan psychoanalyst in practice since 1957, thinks the problem is as basic as a loss of potential growth. "The passive-aggressive is jammed," Firestone says. "He's not experiencing the talents, or the people, or the chances for love that may be right under his nose. The true harm for him is in not really living."

NO KIND OF TREND is easy to measure, and a phenomenon whose very nature demands guardedness and secrecy is particularly tough to pin down. But even if numbers can't reflect it, the popular culture does. When it comes to expressing aggression, the men we're seeing in TV shows and films—especially those created by and for the postwar generation's sensibility—would make Ralph Kramden weep.

Think of Bruce Willis in *Moonlighting*. Everything with him is subterfuge, subtext, even sublimation. Maddie gets married without telling David, and David just disappears.

Maddie: Are you upset? I mean, it's okay if you are, I mean, I suppose you have a right to be. I just wish you'd tell me.

David: I'm not upset.

Maddie: I mean, it's really okay if you are. I mean, I absolutely understand.

David: I'm not upset.

Maddie: I mean, I would be. I would be very, I would be very, very upset. May I ask why?

David: Uh? Why what?

Maddie: Why you're not upset.

David: Upset about what?

On *L.A. Law*, when Kazak is mad, he doesn't answer Gracie's calls. On *thirtysomething*, Michael wants another baby and Hope doesn't, so he tries pouncing on her before she can get up to get her diaphragm. In *Broadcast News*, Albert Brooks is crushed, but he's too scared of losing Holly Hunter to risk expressing his rage. As in *Moonlighting* and *L.A. Law*, it's the woman who finally gets angry and launches the confrontation. ("Bastard, sneak, quitter," Hunter says. "I just found out. You didn't say anything to me? You just resign? Will you meet me now?") The men's modus operandi seems to be: get hit, and run.

While no one would argue that a "To the moon, Alice" approach did anything to improve the species, the crucial thing to realize is that the anger today hasn't really changed. Men may have learned to hide

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## SITUATION 4

Your secretary, who's dumb as a stone, marches into your office and demands a raise.



### PASSIVE RESPONSE

You figure the job doesn't call for a rocket scientist, and you give her what she asks for.



### AGGRESSIVE RESPONSE

You tell her she's got two weeks, which is ten working days, and you hold up both hands to drive home the point.



### PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE RESPONSE

You tell her you'll get back to her as soon as you can, spend the next three months avoiding a... but essential contact, then give her a cost-of-living raise but tell her you have no complaints.



it—from themselves as well as from others—but they haven't gotten rid of it.

But wait (I hear every man I know saying), what about the women? Well, women have more than done their time on this particular emotional ride. Passive-aggression traditionally was the province of the female sex.

"Go ahead. Don't mind me. I'll just sit

here in the rain."

"Is that a new dress? What's different? You look great."

"Your children would like to see you, you know."

"Whatever you say is fine, dear."

Of course there are plenty of women today who are just as passive-aggressive as men. But the same feminism that told men to stop acting macho in the Sixties and Seventies also told women that it was all right for them to express their feelings.

The result is a double whammy for men. As Firestone, who's treated dozens of passive-aggressive men, puts it, "If passive-aggression is more prevalent now, it's because men were freer to show their anger fifteen or twenty years ago. Women have more permission to be assertive in the culture now. The overt balance has shifted. Men of the baby-boom generation started out life with a powerful female controlling their behavior. There was some hope that they might come into their own when they were finally out of the house. But then they ran into women who told them not to be macho schmucks. They're caught between a rock and a hard place, so they just sit there and jiggle."

AND YET for all of the life they miss out on, and all of the fury they cause in others, passive-aggressive men can be brilliant at finding ways of denying their problems.

Remember Moe? Moe is uncommonly good at giving reasons why he never gets closer to the women he dates. For Moe, there's always a fatal flaw: there's always a sentence that starts with, "You know, she's perfect for me, except." With the last one, it was her voice. "You know, she's perfect for me," Moe would tell me, "except that I can't stand her goddamned voice." Of course he would add that he never told her how much he hated her voice. "Hey, I don't like, *call* her Minnie Mouse to her face," he'd say

What he did do was visibly *wince* every time she opened her mouth. I saw him. Why did he think she never said a word when we all went out together? When he met her, this girl was one of the most gregarious people in New York, and within three months he had her sitting at "21" like some waif with big eyes, trying to communicate nonverbally.

"I never told her I didn't like her voice," Moe said.

"Maybe not in words."

"I don't know what you mean."

Of course, for all I know, the Mouse factor may be crucial to Moe. Maybe for some reason it's an unspeakable source of dread and embarrassment when the woman he loves sounds like she wears big white gloves. But if my own experience with Curly is any indication, the problem here is not the woman's voice.

Curly was my first passive-aggressive. Also my last. The first tender words I recall him saying were, "You know, I don't usually fall in love with women who look anything like you." For three years he made me feel so lousy and self-conscious that I lost fifteen pounds I didn't need to lose, and he still used to poke me ("affectionately") in the stomach, and then after we'd broken up and I'd gained back the weight, he told me I looked too skinny. Let's not, I told Moe, waste time talking about the Minnie Mouse voice.

In addition to the Only One Flaw gambit, passive-aggressives have other rationales for not getting closer to the people in their lives. A man I know justifies his passive-aggressive management style by saying it breeds insecurity and insecurity breeds competition and competition breeds creativity and creativity breeds success. One wonders whether it wouldn't be simpler just to say, "Nice job."

Another guy I know loves to wax intellectual about the nature of the difference between men and women. "Men," he will tell me (while clutching a dagger-shaped letter opener in his hand), "want to go through life side by side with women. Women want to go through life face-to-face with men." Says Hart, "Men usually gravitate to areas of interest far removed from the dread areas of personal involvement—from feeling and emotional honesty. In fact, those areas are devalued by men generally, although it's certainly safe to say that that impoverishes human life."

According to Hart, passive-aggressives are notoriously difficult to treat, precisely because they're constantly constructing elaborate systems of such excuses and explanations, often creating other problems ("If she'd just go to a speech therapist, I'd



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marry her in a minute") to mask the deeper ones.

Predictably, the deeper problems have to do with childhood—childhood rage on the one hand and childhood need on the other. The "aggressive" part of passive-aggression comes from the childhood rage, the "passive" part from the childhood need. The need—for love, for food, for life—makes letting the rage out too much of a risk. But the rage doesn't ever go away. It just goes underground.

The possible roots of rage are exhaustive: lack of attention, excess attention, death of a parent, divorce, ridicule, the need of a mother for company, even the need of a mother for sex. Firestone believes that most passive-aggressives had mothers who simply wouldn't let go. Pinned down by expectations and guilt, the men are essentially trapped into infancy, trying to please but wanting to kill. There is so much

part of what makes it so insidious. The mother who gives her son a mixed signal—grow up and make me proud but why do you want to go out and play when you can keep Mommy company—may herself be passive-aggressive and may pass on both her anger and her tendency to say one thing and feel another.

One woman who is married to a passive-aggressive man says he tells her that he loves her but he's not very good at showing it. "I want," she says, "the whole enchilada. I want to know that he wonders whether he could live without me. And I want to feel that way about him. But if you're married to a guy who won't get out on the limb, you're not about to climb out there alone. So I wind up treating him the same way he treats me. I wind up giving these little digs, not telling him what I'm feeling."

In the workplace, you can see this kind of contagion all the time now. A passive-aggressive approach can infect a whole company's culture. A middle manager with a passive-aggressive boss will tend to treat his employees in the same way that he's treated.

"I could see how what I was doing was reinforcing the same instincts in the people beneath me," says one boss who's recently become aware of his problem. "I used to withhold my decisions too long. It seemed to be harmless, but really I left people hanging in the wind. It was actually quite aggressive, and it was unfair to the next people down."

STAN IS A PARTNER in a large law firm. Susan is an associate. "He's so sweet," she says, "and he's so nice, and he's such an incredible asshole." On a certain Monday, Stan tells Susan that they will need to present a brief on Wednesday. This is not a lot of time.

"Come to my office in half an hour," he tells her on the phone. Thirty minutes later, she appears there, legal pad in hand.

## SITUATION 5

You are Mahatma Gandhi and your people are oppressed.

**PASSIVE RESPONSE**  
You move back to South Africa.

**AGGRESSIVE RESPONSE**  
You lead a civil war.

**PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE RESPONSE**  
You march to the sea and make salt.

"Come in, come in!" Stan says warmly from behind his desk—and promptly swivels around in his chair and picks up the telephone.

"Hello, little pumpkin," he starts cooing into the receiver. "How was school today? No, Daddy won't be home for dinner tonight."

Susan is not only outraged that Stan is ignoring her; she's outraged that he's obviously trying to be a good father to his kid. How can she blame him for that?

The phone call is followed by several others. Stan never looks Susan directly in the eye. He never tells her he's sorry. Finally Stan has to leave to go to a partners' meeting down the hall. "I'll buzz you when I'm out," he calls to Susan over his shoulder.

Seven hours later, he has still not called. Susan is stymied on the brief. Several times she calls his office and leaves word with his secretary. Finally, at 6:00, she goes downstairs to his office again.

The punch line is he's left.

There is no acknowledgment the next morning. Stan gives Susan the fifteen minutes she's needed, and she works till four in the morning to complete the brief.

"The thing that made me most crazy," she says, "is that when I told this to another

## SITUATION 7

Your father was King of Denmark, and you're jealous of your mother's new husband.

**PASSIVE RESPONSE**  
You say, "O! Woe is me,  
To have seen what I have seen, see what I see!"

**AGGRESSIVE RESPONSE**  
You say, "O villain, villain, smiling damned villain!"

**PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE RESPONSE**  
You say, "To be, or not to be: that is the question...."

## SITUATION 6

Your mother lets you know that she expects to see her new grandson every Sunday for brunch.

**PASSIVE RESPONSE**  
You buy a baby seat for the car.

**AGGRESSIVE RESPONSE**  
You tell her the guilt trip won't work anymore and remind her that Sunday is your day for golf.

**PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE RESPONSE**  
You take a job in another city.

anger inside them that to express it becomes unthinkable; even to let themselves see it is rare. Who knows what horrors would be unleashed, and how terrible that would make them seem.

Firestone tells of a patient who had an unusual impotence problem. He had no trouble making love on his back, but when he was lying on top of a woman, he'd get a permanent hard-on and could not ejaculate. (This didn't bother the woman much, but the patient wasn't too thrilled.) Says Firestone: "He was harboring so much anger toward his mother that he basically turned his penis into a .45-caliber gun. He actually had dreams about it. As long as he was underneath, he wasn't 'responsible' for what happened. In the dominant position, though, to come meant pulling the trigger."

IF YOU WANT TO TAKE the broad view, you can think of passive-aggression as a quietly raging forest fire. Passive-aggression burns deep, and passive-aggression spreads far, and its tendency to travel is

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associate, he just kept saying that he didn't see the problem. He kept saying, 'That's just the way things are around here, that's how they've always been,' and meanwhile he's got two paralegals who are waiting outside his office."

MY FRIEND OLLIE FELL in love a few years ago and got married to a woman who, in fairly short order, told him four things. The first was that she knew a passive-aggressive when she saw one, the second was that she saw one, the third was that she loved him, the fourth was that she was going to help him work it out somehow.

Ollie's wife has an amazing way of standing outside the pattern of their lives and not taking his act too seriously. She also has a way of calling him on his passive-aggression without being holier-than-thou about it. Personally, I think she's incredible. Ollie gets major points, too: he seems to sense the rareness and the strength of this woman, and I've heard them laugh together about the tricks that his anger can play on them.

In effect, Ollie's wife is doing just what a shrink would do for him. She is helping him see the pattern, which is usually the toughest part. The whole psychological point of passive-aggression is to spare oneself the messy implications of one's anger. And it's no picnic getting a grown-up man to say he's a child inside. Says Hart: "You find men feeling as if they were still infants, and acting that way, but not admitting it. Their feeling of anger is so intense. It's never been dealt with and never brought out, so it feels like a monstrosity."

Firestone describes the challenge in terms of child versus adult belief systems. If you can start by assembling an accurate picture of what the man was as a child, he says, then show how the childhood beliefs are still present in his life, the very act of observation becomes the seed of the adult, and the man who is looking at the child in himself gets stronger and stronger over time.

Seeing the child, of course, is only the first step. And passive-aggressives are great at paying lip service to their problem. "They'll say, 'Yeah, I'm just terrible, I'm no good at all,'" Hart explains. "That totally relieves them of responsibility. But it doesn't solve the problem to go on being guilty."

Says Hart: "You need a relationship, either with an analyst or someone who's strong enough to stand a little and let it emerge in its true light. You don't go off by yourself and meditate and solve this problem alone." Hart believes in the power of laughter to put passive-aggression into perspective, and he doesn't underestimate the

need for courage.

"One woman said to me not long ago, 'Men are cowards,'" he recalls. "But if you consider the intensity of these feelings that men often have, you understand that just being there and trying his best is an act of courage."

THESE ARE SOME OF THE THINGS that a passive-aggressive man can learn to want:

- ▶ Less of what is holding him back
- ▶ More of what he loves.

THESE ARE SOME OF THE THINGS that a

passive-aggressive man can learn to do:

- ▶ End a bad relationship.
- ▶ Laugh at himself.
- ▶ Reward good work and criticize bad.
- ▶ Show up on time for dinner.
- ▶ Admit he's a passive-aggressive and that the sun still rises.

THESE ARE SOME OF THE THINGS that a passive-aggressive man can learn to say:

- ▶ "I won't."
- ▶ "You're fired."
- ▶ "Fuck off."
- ▶ "I need you." ☐

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# The LIGHT in AUGUST

Playwright  
August Wilson  
wanted to be  
Dylan Thomas—  
but he  
couldn't shake  
the blues

By Chip Brown

THERE IS A NEIGHBORHOOD at the heart of August Wilson's work known simply as the Hill. In Pittsburgh after the war, it was a catchall mix of poor Italians, Jews, and blacks, and the soot from the steel mills fell so thickly you could write your name on the hood of a car. Wilson's name in those days was Freddy Kittel, and he used to trace it in the dust.

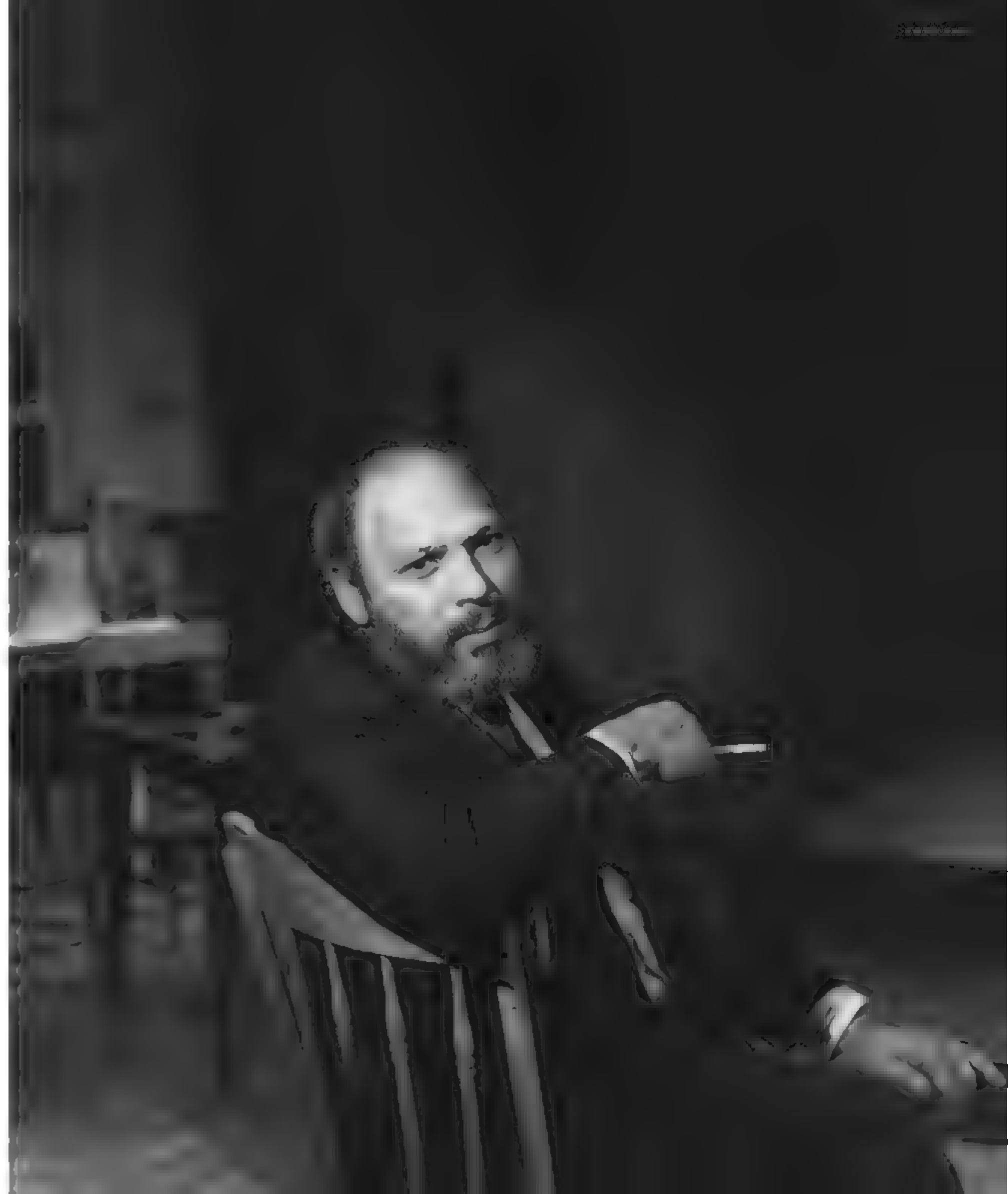
The son of a white father and a black mother, Wilson grew up in a two-room apartment behind a grocery store on Bedford Avenue. At four he learned to read. At fifteen he quit school and studied in the public library, holding books close to "crawl inside the words." At twenty he moved into a boardinghouse, a self-avowed poet scribbling on paper bags at Pope's restaurant and soaking up the stories of the old men at Pat's cigar store. The old men called him Youngblood, and they looked to him for scholarship because he was always lug-

ging stuff to read. *Hey Youngblood, tell this fool, ain't the moon a million miles away?*

The young poet's writing owed almost everything to Dylan Thomas. So did his "British school" attire, picked from the thrift racks of St. Vincent DePaul, where tweed jackets were thirty-five cents and ties a nickel. "He was Dylan Thomas," says old friend Nick Flournoy. And when the day came to make his literary debut, Wilson took the floor at a local art gallery and delivered from memory Thomas's magnificent poem "Should Lanterns Shine." "I have been told to reason by the heart, / But heart, like head, leads helplessly. / I have heard many years of telling, / And many years should see some change...."

One's own voice is what a writer searches for. There were nights when Wilson couldn't sleep for the euphoria of the hunt. No matter that he was no favorite of

Voice from  
the Hill: Wilson on  
the set of  
his latest play, *The  
Piano Lesson*





They call in the middle of the night: 'I understand you're an old friend of August Wilson's.' I say, 'Is he still writing? Is he still writing?'"

the magazines, an uncredentialed poet gathering reaction slips. "Style," as he would write years later, "ain't nothing but keeping the same idea from beginning to end." Style he had. The prospect of getting older, of someday turning forty, only fortified his resolve. You'll have been writing for twenty years, he told himself. Think how much better you'll be.

IT'S A RAINY MARCH NIGHT in Pittsburgh, and August Wilson is drinking at the Crawford Grill with his hail-companions, Flournoy and Rob Penny. African statues outnumber customers, and the stage where John Coltrane once played nine nights running is empty. Twenty years ago Wilson and Flournoy and Penny were inseparable—young disciples jazzed up on women and words. As Dylan Thomas said, many years have seen some change. Penny is now a playwright and a professor at the University of Pittsburgh; Flournoy is a former CORE chairman and a community organizer. Wilson is famous.

"They call me in the middle of the night," says Flournoy. "'I understand you're an old friend of August Wilson's.' I say, 'Is he still writing? Is he still writing?' Don't let him recite that novel of his to you. He'll keep you up all night."

Wilson smiles and sips his watered bourbon, happy to be teased.

"I met this nigger in 1962," Flournoy says. "He had majesty even then."

"I was grand," Wilson admits, mocking the airs of his younger self—but gently, because "the purpose of your youth," he says, "is to show you what you need to know."

"You were majestic!" says Flournoy. "You had a sense of majesty."

At forty-three, Wilson has the energy of a seer and the body of a cleanup hitter. He still affects the British-school-thrift-shop style, success notwithstanding, and his manner, as journalists are wont to note, is unassuming and humble. He has a high forehead, a salt-and-pepper beard, and soft brown eyes that often seem to be contemplating some inward country. He is usually wreathed in cigarette smoke, thanks to a

four-pack-a-day nicotine habit. When he tells a story his hands chop the air. Smoke swirls.

You can hear in Wilson's speaking voice the overtones of his double life on the street and in the library. The highbrow poet recites in a grand and plangent baritone, modeled on Dylan Thomas's and inflected with some of the Welshman's literary-sounding vowels. When Wilson the playwright jabbars on as one of his characters, his voice is a dancing, darting, raspy, sassy, smoke-cured, street-smart treble. This is the voice of the Hill, the voice that he has flawlessly reproduced in the texts of his plays.

"I read all these articles where they say August Wilson is 'unassuming and humble,'" says Flournoy. "I say, 'Are you motherfuckers crazy, this nigger is creating art!' Here's a motherfucker who's gonna write a play about every decade I been alive and my grandfather's been alive. There's nothing humble about that."

WILSON QUIT PITTSBURGH eleven years ago, his reputation as an obscure poet uncompromised. Six years later he borrowed a tuxedo for the Broadway debut of *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, and before long he was back with *Fences*, dispelling any idea about one-play playwrights. While *Fences* was going strong last spring, *Joe Turner's Come and Gone* arrived, and Wilson had two shows on Broadway at once, plus a new play, *The Piano Lesson*, waiting in the wings. *The New York Times* pronounced him "the theater's most astonishing writing discovery in this decade."

All three productions won the New York Drama Critics Circle Award, and *Fences* corralled everything, including the Tony and Pulitzer. *Fences* made him rich too, grossing a record \$12 million its first year. Film rights alone brought \$500,000, a fortune to a man who a few years ago was working as an \$88-a-week cook.

But money, champagne, and plaques for the hall wall are not what propel August Wilson. He took up playwrighting to "tell a history that has never been told." His plays

are peopled with farmers, railroad men, trampeters, home-run hitters, preachers—people who are grappling with the legacy of exile and with the nature of identity itself. "We done sold ourselves to the white man in order to be like him," says the piano player Toledo, describing the quandary of black people in America. Like all Wilson's characters, Toledo stands in a continuum of selves that stretches back to Africa and its music, its gods and ghosts. To know who you are now, the playwright insists, you must know who you were hundreds of years ago. Wilson's characters are universal figures in this sense, standing for all people who have ever wrestled with themselves or been altered by things they "ain't got words to tell."

The four major plays are not polemical, and Wilson's intent and methods differ from those of the revolutionary playwrights of the Sixties. This is not to say that his work lacks a political dimension but rather that he has found a way to formulate his politics in his art. He acknowledges his debt to the firebrands who fought on the front lines of the struggle for freedom and justice, but Wilson's emphasis is black life on its own terms, not in confrontation with the white man's system.

"I've tried to fuse my artistic consciousness and my political consciousness," Wilson said last spring in New York. "I may be saying there's an illness here, but I don't know what the prescription is. I don't consider myself a suffering writer. I don't create my art out of the suffering and pain of the human condition, I create it out of the zestful part of life. Out of—I want to say love, but it sounds corny."

"Exaltation?"

"Exaltation is a great word."

When talking to Wilson you sometimes get a sense of what Tennessee Williams meant when he wrote that for an artist "the actual world is less intense than the world of his invention." It's that visionary light in his eyes. Watchful, private, wary of success, Wilson kept TV cameras out of his house when he won the Pulitzer, and he fends off trespassing questions, more comfortable reviewing painful episodes through the medium of a character. Close readers can spot passages in *Ma Rainey* that address the breakup of his first marriage in 1972, and the parts of *Fences* that were inspired by Wilson's uneasy relationship with his black stepfather.

For some questions the work yields few clues. Even friends don't know what bearing Wilson's mixed heritage has on his art.

Chip Brown's last piece for *Esquire*, "The Transformation of Johnny Spain," appeared in January 1988.



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*When your back is pressed to the wall you go to the deepest part of yourself, and there's a response—it's your great ancestors talking.'*

tion to trace the history of black identity in his planned cycle of plays, one for each decade of the twentieth century. Claude Purdy, who lives near Wilson in St. Paul (they've been close friends for more than fifteen years), didn't know Wilson's father was white until he read it in a magazine two years ago.

He's always been a loner," says Rob Penny.

"There was always a screen where you couldn't cross over, otherwise you would be interfering with his dignity," says Nick Flournoy.

"I want to get inside August Wilson," says Wilson's sister Freda Ellis. "What is it about him that makes his work what it is? How important is it for him to be black? What does he see that I don't see?"

BACK AT THE GRILL, the conversation has turned to the vogue in African "free names" twenty years ago.

"You and Rob laughed at mine," says Flournoy.

"Listen to what you came up with," says Wilson.

"What did you come up with?" I ask. Wilson and Penny smirk at their drinks.

"Naheest," Flournoy confesses. "It meant black prince."

Wilson and Penny are smiling outright.

"If you're a black prince," says Wilson, laughing, "then there's no hope for the movement."

I ask for the spelling of *Naheest*.

"N-a." Flournoy says haltingly. "I can't remember," he says. He looks over at Wilson. "August had a free name. August, what was yours?"

Wilson doesn't answer.

"Rob, what was August's free name?"

"Mbulu," Penny says.

"Mbulu. That's right." Flournoy trades a low five with his friend Fred McGowan, who has joined us at the Grill. Wilson seems unhappy hearing his free name, but he doesn't say anything.

"They used to call me Money," says McGowan. "They still call me Money, but I've been broke for fifteen years."

AUGUST WILSON'S GRANDMOTHER arrived on the Hill in the manner of thousands of migrating blacks—she walked from North Carolina. His mother, Daisy, was a homebody and a stoic, the sort you'd call ma'am Wilson, the fourth of six kids, was her oldest son, she instilled in him a sense of responsibility, sending him downtown to square the electric bill and shop for groceries. Ten years old and he could dicker with the butcher. Daisy wanted him to study law at Notre Dame. *You can do whatever you want, she would say. Your IQ is 143.*

Daisy Wilson once won a radio contest sponsored by the Morton Salt company. The prize was a new Speed Queen washer, which meant no more scrubbing laundry by hand. But when the contest sponsors learned she was black, they tried to fob her off with a secondhand machine. Friends urged her to take it, but she'd as soon wash socks by hand as go back on principle, and she turned the offer down. It was a lesson her son never forgot.

Wilson's white father was Frederick August Kittel. He was a tall, red-haired baker who didn't stay much at the apartment in back of Bella's grocery store. Wilson remembers seeing him only when he dropped by with a sack of Danish pastry. He had emigrated from Germany when he was ten. Freda E. keeps an album with a few pictures of the stranger posed in bathing trunks by a river bridge; she remembers his temper flaring when he drank or discovered dirty dishes in the sink.

"He was a sporadic presence," says Wilson. "The last time I saw him, he was telling me about the battle of the Argonne forest." When Wilson legally adopted his mother's name in the 1970s, it was the final stamp on a renunciation made years before in spirit.

Surrogate fathers were plentiful in the community. Wilson was attached to boxer Charley Burley, an uncrowned middleweight champion whose fights were the talk of the Hill. And he had the guidance of his black stepfather, David Bedford, who died in 1969. The family house was poor,

but the children never lacked food or distraction. "Freddy" read Nancy Drew books. He raced around in a milk-crate go-cart. He played stickball, belting long drives off the billboard where Willie Mays was pictured hawking Alaga syrup.

Wilson attended Catholic schools, always in a good pair of shoes. He was a bright but obstreperous student, yelling answers out of turn.

"I was a smartass," he said. "I questioned everything—especially religion. In fifth grade they taught us the Adam and Eve story. They said the serpent lied to Eve. I got the Bible, and I read where God said the serpent didn't lie. I thought I'd made a great discovery. I thought they were gonna call up the pope and send me to Rome. Sister Mary Eldephonse said, 'Sit down.' I was crushed."

School personalized his conception of bigotry. He'd seen that the men tendering Stride Rites at the shoe store were black and the men handling the money were white. He'd seen how Bella never let her black clerk near the till. His stepfather relocated the family to a predominantly white suburb, and bricks came crashing through the front window. At fourteen, Wilson ate lunch alone; classmates wouldn't sit with him. Every day he found a note on his desk: "Nigger go home." He was always getting into fights.

The final affront came from a black history teacher who accused him of plagiarizing a twenty-page paper on Napoleon. Wilson had knocked himself out researching and writing; his sister Linda had typed it on a rented machine. The teacher beckoned him to the front—to commend him, Wilson thought. The paper had been marked A+/E.

"I'm going to give you one of these two grades."

"What do you mean?"

"Where did you do your research?"

"It's in the bibliography and footnotes."

"You have older sisters, don't you?"

"I didn't realize what he was saying. I should have said, 'Oh yeah, I write papers for them.' I looked confused. The teacher said, 'I don't think you wrote this paper.' And he marked it an E. In fairness, he'd seen no exhibition of my ability in class, because I didn't like him. I took it and I tore it up and I put it in the garbage can and I walked out of that school forever."

So not to alarm his mother, Wilson departed for school each morning, but passed the time shooting baskets outside the principal's window. In the afternoon he holed up in the public library with books by Langston Hughes, Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison, and other writers segregated in the "Negro section."

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MONSIEUR

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SAINT

CHANEL

POUR  
MONSIEUR



*You get to the point where your demons get smaller and smaller and you get bigger and bigger. They're mere pests. Pssst! Get away from me!"*

"I felt I could learn what I needed at the library. I knew by the time I was fifteen that I was going to write. I knew it was my strong suit."

Pressured by his mother, he entered the Army at seventeen but wangled a discharge and returned home a year later. Daisy had had enough and wanted him out of her hair. "Go on, you're grown," she said. "It's time for you to be out on your own."

And so in the fall of 1965, filled with a sense of occasion, Wilson left his mother's house to take his place on the corner with the youngbods in their Florsheim shoes and Stetson hats. He moved a few doors down the street to a rooming house on Bedford Avenue. It was a busy place, tenanted by melancholics, retired counterfeeters, and a suicidal singer who aspired to be Billy Eckstine and who asked Wilson to type his final message to the world. Vivid as it was, the pageantry of the Hill in those days paled beside the landscape of words. Wilson was engrossed in poetry.

"I could have gone over a cliff in a bus and not looked up," he recalled. "I thought of myself as a poet like Dylan Thomas, but nobody knew it. I knew I had to get better. I didn't think I had to go to school to do it. I thought I was doing it already. I couldn't find a decent job, but I could write all day. That was wide open."

He earned his keep working what was to become a long résumé of menial jobs—gardener, porter, sheet-metal worker, toy-store stock boy, dishwasher, short-order cook. He had taken an interest in cooking from his mother. He was on his own, but not so far away that he was unaffected by the aromas of his mother's kitchen, and he usually trotted home each night for supper.

ROB PENNY HAS BEGGED OFF for the night, and the rest of us are getting hungry when Nick Flournoy's brother Michael drops by the Crawford Grill. He and Wilson shake hands warmly, and then Michael, a psychiatric counsellor with the Veterans Administration, starts to fill Wilson in on his upcoming trip to New York.

"I got plane tickets, man."

"He thinks maybe you can fix him up with some theater tickets," Nick Flournoy says.

"Sure," Wilson says. "That's no problem."

"I want to see your play."

Wilson's face lights up.

"Which one?"

"I want to see both."

"Brother Mike wants to see both!" cries Brother Nick, laughing as it history would never record a more humorous case of glut-tony.

"Now you know what I've had to put up with for twenty years," Wilson says. He ducks away to use the telephone.

"August defies all the things you're talking about," says Brother Mike. "You're talking about a man who was miseducated, who grew up with a lack of stimulation, with poverty, depression, you're talking about a man who's been neglected since the day he's been born—and he won the Pulitzer Prize."

"Did he tell you about the tie I gave him?" says Brother Nick. "I wanted to see if he was still the same nigger who used to wear those ugly ties."

"He said he always wore ties because he took after the poets of the British school."

"British school? Is that what he told you? That motherfucker dressed like a bag lady!" cries Flournoy, and extends his hand to receive low fives for excellence.

AT THE HALFWAY Art Gallery, Pittsburgh's vestige of Beat Culture in the mid-Sixties, there was jazz at night, poetry on Sunday. Wilson discovered a community of kindred spirits. Dingbat the sculptor, Barbara Peterson, the painter, and Charley P. Williams, Flournoy, and Penny, with whom he formed the Centre Avenue Poets Theatre Workshop. They scraped up money to publish little magazines. They hailed each other in the playful code of theater people. "My liege! How goeth thy father the king?" They tossed out lines of poetry, challenging the others to produce the writer's name.

Wilson found an equally compelling

community in the tradition of the blues. He got a record player for a few dollars and in a pile of old 78s found a disc with a yellow typewritten label: "Nobody in Town Can Bake a Jelly Roll Like Mine." Bessie Smith. Who was Bessie Smith, he wondered, dropping the needle in the groove?

"I was stunned," he recalled. "It was one of the most beautiful songs I'd ever heard. I thought, 'This person is talking to me. This is mine.' All other records paled."

He played the record twenty-two times in a row, the world shifted before his eyes.

"I began to look at people in the rooming house differently. I had seen them as beaten. I was twenty, and these were old people. I didn't see the value to their lives. You could never have told me there was a richness and a fullness to their lives. I began to see it. I was simply making a connection from Bessie Smith to people who had lived in Harlem in the 1920s."

In the blues he found an immense archive of black culture, a cache of humor, wisdom, politics. He would build an aesthetic on that discovery, writing years later in *Ma Ramey*: "White folks don't understand the blues. They hear it come out, but they don't know how it got there. They don't understand that's life's way of talking. You don't sing to feel better. You sing 'cause that's a way of understanding life."

"I began to see myself as a conduit of antecedents," Wilson said. "I placed myself on the line. People say to me, 'What gives you the right to write about 1936?' Nobody. I take the right. It's all part of the blood's memory. You just open yourself up to it. When your back is pressed to the wall you go to the deepest part of yourself, and there's a response—it's your great ancestors talking. It's blood's memory. In writing, I try to tap into that well, I try to tap into that part where ancestors are talking. I believe it exists."

In the late 1960s Wilson was introduced to the ideas of Malcolm X and took up the banner of cultural nationalism.

"Cultural nationalism meant black people working toward self-definition, self-determination," Wilson said. "It meant that we had a culture that was valid and that we weren't willing to trade it to participate in the American Dream."

Theater attracted people looking for ways to promote those goals. Wilson and Rob Penny founded Black Horizons in 1968, hoping the stage could help them "alter their relations with society." They scratched up money and mounted the work of black writers. (Wilson tried his hand at playwriting but found he had no ear for dialogue.) It was an exciting time. The productions were staged at a local elementary school. Wilson directed, painted sets, and

sold tickets. He filled in when actors failed to show up. Black Horizons took its shows to colleges from Mississippi to Ohio.

In those days the men Wilson admired had "the warrior spirit," men who braved the police and jail, and would go as far as stealing to get what they had been denied under a racist system. He did not admire middle-class blacks who moved out of the ghetto—who admonished their children not to show their color. He could be tough. When Claude Purdy once defended pop music, Wilson dragged him to the jukebox, defying him to find one "committed song." Purdy considers himself lucky that there happened to be a tune by Marvin Gaye in the rack.

TIME AT LAST TO LEAVE the Crawford Grill. Fred McGowan's car sits out front. Wilson and Flournoy climb in the back. Soon the interior has the smoky ambience of a nightclub. On the occasion of a good line, the pair celebrate with a flurry of hand slaps. McGowan drives down Wylie Avenue, past Lena's Bar and Grill. Every vacant block simmers with the memory of old jazz clubs and whorehouses. Of people who vanished, of places transformed by time.

"That's the library where I used to go," Wilson says, peering at a sturdy collection of books. "Wylie Avenue branch. It's now a Muslim mosque."

We nose through an intersection and swing down the Hill toward the Monongahela River.

"Now, August," says Flournoy, turning serious. "If I had two plays that were contenders for the Pulitzer Prize, and one of them that won, and a third play opening on Broadway, I might find it hard to—write—you know. Maybe you think now you are competing with yourself?"

"No, man, you hang it up on the wall. None of that shit helps you write. If you have an awareness of that you'd be scared to write."

"That's beautiful. None of that shit's in the room with you."

"It's just you and the typewriter."

"Do you ever write dumb lines?"

"What?"

"Dumb lines."

"Dumb scenes."

"Where you get all this knowledge?" asks Fred McGowan.

Before Wilson can answer, Flournoy replies: "Waking up and down Centre Avenue. Standing outside Pat's cigar store."

Fred McGowan seems amazed. Flournoy turns to me and says, "You know, Fred used to play some ball, like Troy Maxson." Maxson is the embittered ex-home-run king in *Fences* who is reduced to collecting

the white man's garbage and dreaming of what he might have had, had he come along after the color barrier had been broken.

"Troy Maxson was a tremendously unfulfilled athlete," McGowan says.

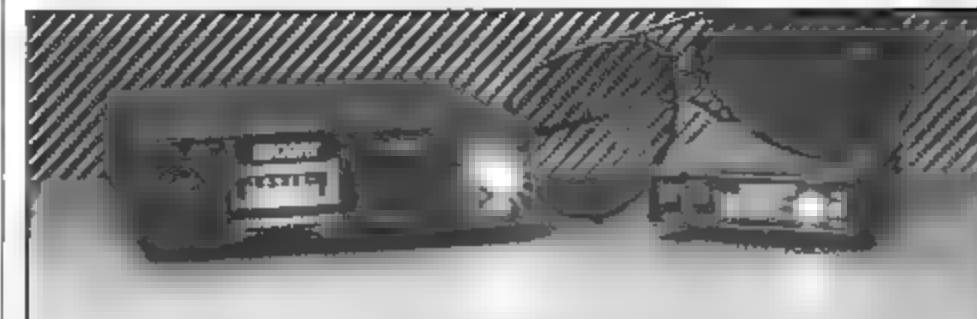
"Were you good?" I ask McGowan.

"I played against guys who couldn't hold my glove, and they played for the Pirates!" he cries, his voice throbbing with the injustice of it.

Out of respect or sympathy, or understanding that this had happened in a man's life—not in a play—the people in the car fall silent.

IN 1973 WILSON WROTE a poem called "Morning Statement," in an unlabored voice. It was a breakthrough, proof that he had finally achieved what poet Robert Duncan calls surety. (Not until the end of the decade would he show the same sure hand as a dramatist.)

"I was wrassling with poems," Wilson recalls. "I'd see them as if it was war, and I was a general. You only get the initial moment of creation once. I would have the initial impulse but I didn't know how to craft it. Once you achieve surety, you don't worry about crafting because you know that



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BEU	Radio Shack	Whistler
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later on you will have the chance."

He made a more serious stab at playwriting that year, and ironically it was heartbreak, not politics, that prompted his foray into the new form.

In 1969, at a small ceremony on the Hill, he had married a local girl named Brenda Burton. His daughter Sakina was born in 1970. Brenda Burton was a Muslim woman. "August tried hard to be a Muslim man," Rob Penny says. "He sold *Mohammed Speaks*—the Muslim newspaper—and he wore a black suit and bow tie." Freda Elus, who used to tease him about how few copies he sold, speculates that the Muslim culture "might have put him in touch with the way blacks think, the way the black and white world treated each other."

By 1972 the marriage was finished. Wilson and his first wife did not talk for more than fifteen years. Rob Penny doesn't know what caused the break, although he believes the story surfaces in *Ma Rainey* in a passage spoken by Toledo:

*"She went out and joined the church  
Soon she figured she got a heathen on her hands  
She figures she couldn't live like that  
Packed up one day and moved out  
To this day I ain't never said another word to her  
Come home one day and my house was empty  
And I sat down and figured out that  
I was a fool not to see that she needed*

*something that I wasn't giving her.  
Yeah, so Toledo been a fool about a woman.  
That's part of making life. But I ain't  
never been the same fool twice."*

After his divorce, looking to exorcise "man and woman stuff," Wilson wrote a one-act play called *Recycle*. The language was figurative, a vein he continued to mine with *Homecoming* and *The Coldest Day of the Year*. None of these works satisfied him. It was clear he was still forcing lines into the mouths of his characters. In frustration, Wilson went to Penny, who'd written many plays.

"How do you make your characters talk?" he asked.

"You don't. You just listen to them."

The tenets of creative-writing class seem profound when you meet them for the first time. Wilson went back to the typewriter, determined to audit rather than manipulate his characters. Another task remained: reconciling himself to his own speech. Wilson is a creature of language—he doesn't travel because he dislikes the disorientation of a strange tongue and incomprehensible signs. For a long time he did not find any beauty in the grammar of the Hill. The habitués of Centre Avenue didn't talk like Dylan Thomas. It was only after he left the Hill that Wilson really began to hear the poetry of the common speech.

IT IS A FAMILIAR MOTIF, the writer finding the distance that makes everything seem within reach. Wilson's move from Pittsburgh was inspired by Claude Purdy. Purdy, who had moved away himself, was visiting the city when he heard Wilson read a series of poems about a character named Black Bart.

"You should turn this into a play," he said afterward.

Purdy pestered his friend. Four months later, Wilson handed him a 120-page script called *Black Bart and the Sacred Hills*. It was a satirical piece for twenty-seven characters. Back in St. Paul in November 1977, Purdy urged Wilson to come north and rewrite the script. He sent a ticket. It was no skin off Wilson's nose, so he went.

St. Paul had a fraction of the black population of Pittsburgh and not much in the way of distraction. ("There's nothing else to do but write," says Purdy. During the visit, Purdy's wife, Jacqui, introduced Wilson to a social worker named Judy Oliver. Wilson showed her one of his scripts, she made him dinner. She was struck by his honesty and the sense that he spoke with a "true heart." Wilson, for his part, was moved to relocate to St. Paul the following spring, in 1981 the couple were married.

To support himself Wilson got a job composing dramas for the Minnesota Sci-

ence Center. He wrote about the North west Indians, Charles Darwin, and Margaret Mead, the first writing work that paid since the twenty dollars he got bawling out a term paper for Freda.

Driving home once after a trip to Pittsburgh with Judy, Wilson got to thinking about the jitney stations on the Hill. The men who drove the private shuttles would kill time between calls playing checkers and swapping stories. A perfect setting for a play. Home in St. Paul, he took his pad to a fish-and-chips place. In ten days he had a draft. He was dizzy. He had turned an enormous corner.

Wilson sent *Jitney* to the Minneapolis Playwrights Center and won a \$200-a-month fellowship. He and the other playwrights in the program made up a new fraternity. The possibilities of the stage seemed wide open. He conceived a play called *Fullerton Street*, set in the 1940s. He quit the science center to spend more time writing. There was Judy's salary, and to hold up his end, Wilson got a job cooking for the staff at a social-service organization. Four hours a day at the grill of the Little Brothers of the Poor, four at the typewriter. He and Judy lived in a three-room apartment with a cat named Maxwell and a view of the St. Paul Cathedral. They rolled pennies to make ends meet.

Wilson thought he was in top form, but he hadn't developed a playwright's instinct for proportion. *Jitney* and *Fullerton Street* were rejected by the National Playwrights Conference at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center in Waterford, Connecticut. Rereading the plays, Wilson eventually had to agree: *Jitney* was too slight, and *Fullerton Street* unworkably big. But he was going good on something new. He was calling it *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*, and he thought, *Maybe this will be the one.*

THE SUMMER PROGRAM at the O'Neill draws some of the country's best playwrights for a month of workshops, staged readings, and literary carousing. Artistic director Lloyd Richards also heads the Yale drama school and the Yale Repertory Theatre. Of the one thousand scripts screened, one hundred are worth reading, and of that select crop, says Richards, only one is exceptional enough to produce.

The readers at the O'Neill had gotten plenty of stuff from August Wilson: two film scripts and three plays. Here was another—fifty-nine pages—but it was better, it wasn't bad at all. *Lloyd should see this.*

"The talent was unmistakable," recalled Richards. "The characters were alive. They were people I had met in the barbershop on Saturday morning, talking about baseball,

philosophy, politics. You'd hear humor, imagery, poetry—the poetry of oppressed people who have to create a sense of freedom in their words, people living more in their vision than their actuality."

Like Wilson, *Ma Rainey* was actually the product of two separate drafts—one about the singer and one about her band members. Wilson fused them. By the end of the conference, Wilson had a script that Richards thought was one in a thousand.

Richards was the final piece in Wilson's success. He nominated him for grants, introduced him to producers and agents, and took him to his first musical. Richards has given the playwright the benefit of more than forty years of stage experience. August, he said once, *these actors need some time to change their clothes.*

With Richards directing, *Ma Rainey* opened at the Yale Repertory Theatre in April 1984. Six months later, the poet from the Hill was on Broadway.

STATE OFFICIALS APPLAUD EX-COOK WHOSE PLAY CHARMED A SELECT CIRCLE. Now, of course, the part-time cook is a man acclaimed by governors and mayors. As the people in his adopted home city and state came to honor him last night, Wilson shook his head, seemingly stunned. He mopped his brow and



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wondered nervously it it would be all right to smoke in the building.  
*Minneapolis Star and Tribune,*  
May 28, 1987

It takes Wilson about two months to produce a draft and about eighteen months for rewrites. He works in bars and restaurants, leaving the house at noon to stop by Bailey's or Sweeny's or Tommy K's. Friendly bartenders turn up the lights. He types his pages at night, staying up until 3:00 or 4:00 A.M. "Sometimes I can hear him clicking on the keys," says Judy Oliver. "It sounds like a lullaby."

He does almost no research on the decades he writes about. His plays germinate from images or scraps of dialogue or the texture of a blues song. *Fences* sprang from the image of a man holding a baby—Wilson wanted to depict a black man cleaving to responsibilities. *Joe Turner* began with the despairing figure of a man hand in a Romare Bearden collage.

There's a passage in *Joe Turner* in which the "conjure man" Bynum, the man keeping alive the natural wisdom of Africa, tells how each person has to find his own song. In a sense it is Wilson describing his method and his voice, the fruits of that search he started all those years ago on the Hill.

*"It was my song. It had come from way*

*deep inside me. I looked way back in my memory and gathered up pieces and snatches of things to make that song. I was making it up out of myself. And that song helped me on the road. Made it smooth to where my footsteps didn't bite back at me. All that time that song was getting bigger and bigger. That song was growing with each step of the road. It got so that I used all of myself up in the making of that song."*

"I haven't read Shakespeare. I haven't read Ibsen, Williams, O'Neill—none of those guys," Wilson says cheerfully. "But I feel confident enough now in terms of my voice to read those guys without being influenced. Writing is a process of self-discovery. You make discoveries about yourself and your relation to the world. You get to the point where your demons, which are terrifying, get smaller and smaller and you get bigger and bigger. They're mere pests. *Pssst!* Get away from me! As your spirit gets larger you say to your demons, 'I used to be terrified of you—now get out of my way.' It's a great feeling."

Then he laughs and says, "Then you turn around and there is a whole new set, twice as big."

MCGOWAN STEERS across the river and pulls into Station Square. Supposedly

Flournoy knows a good spaghetti joint called Noodles, but he leads us into Houlihan's, where we are about to take seats before he realizes he's made a navigational error. Low fives are traded at Flournoy's expense. Noodles is at the other end of the mall. The tablecloths are black, the napkins red.

"I like this place," Wilson says. Black and red are the colors of the marquee advertising *Joe Turner*.

During supper, Flournoy held center stage, making deft but vain attempts to secure the waitress's phone number. Wilson forked up his pasta, his head bowed low. He seemed vulnerable, no screens. Sharing food with someone is a kind of nakedness. All the weeks we had been talking, all the weeks in which he had been nothing but helpful and sincere, I thought how little I really knew of him, how little you ever really know of anyone.

We had taken the train from Boston to New York one day, talking for a long time about his mother. Daisy Wilson had died of lung cancer in March 1983, just before her son got famous. Wilson said it had never set right with her that he was wasting the best part of his life writing.

"She always saw me as a failure," he said.

"She was always pointing to Sidney—

Sidney McClanahan, who worked down at the Ford plant. She'd say, 'Look at Sidney. He's making eleven dollars an hour.' Sidney had a house, a car, he was a success. I had nothing."

He brushed ash from the folder of poems on his lap and stubbed out his cigarette on the sole of his shoe.

"She came up to the O'Neill Conference, so she knew I was making some movement, but it would have meant a lot to her if she could have lived to see *Ma Rainey*. If she could have lived long enough to see me with a play on Broadway...."

His voice sank into the racket of the train.

Each year on the anniversary of her death, he returns to Pittsburgh to lay flowers on her grave. Wouldn't she have been proud of those official August Wilson days decreed two years ago in Pittsburgh and St. Paul? *Governors and mayors*... Suddenly Wilson jumped into character, the ne'er-do-well son who got that damn Sidney off his back: "See, Ma! I told you I was writing!"

**FAST ON THE DRAW**, Wilson whips out an American Express Gold Card and covers the check. It is close to 11:00. Outside we stand in the drizzle, waiting for McGowan to ease out of his parking space. Light quiv-

ers on the river. The car shoots back without warning.

"Look out!" shouts Wilson.

"That nigger'll run you right over," says Flournoy.

And then we are traveling again, the tires hissing on the wet streets, the group of us enclosed by rain and the sense of company.

"Monkeys wink too much and are afraid of snakes," Wilson says.

"Marianne Moore," Flournoy replies.

We stop at a traffic light at the bottom of the Hill.

Wilson is staying at his sister Freda Ellis's house. We will drop him off first, then McGowan and Flournoy will go miles out of their way to help me find a cheap place to sleep. On that late-night errand, we will talk about the man who paid for dinner.

"He looked a little embarrassed when I brought up his free name," Flournoy will say.

"Is he sensitive about it?"

"I don't know.... He can afford to be magnanimous now." (And I will remember at the Grill having seen Wilson slip a wad of money into Flournoy's hand.) "You know, August has only been out of the garret three years."

"The garret?"

"The garret—an artistic and intellectual place. Now that he's out of the garret, he's

trying to find a way to maintain his warrior status in your scheme."

"The white world?"

Flournoy will nod and find the point that has been nagging him.

"August Wilson is on a trek," he will say. "He's saying who you are and what you are are all right. It's all right to be an angry nigger. It's all right to be whatever you are. It's what the great Irish writers did. They took that narrow world and they said, 'Here it is.' Here it is and its meaning is universal."

**NOW THE LIGHT HAS CHANGED.** The four of us are riding up the Hill past Freedom Corner, past the frowsy lots and rundown row houses on Bedford Avenue. Banks of mist play about the towers of the city. McGowan brakes outside Freda Ellis's house, and we all listen for a moment to the rain rapping on the hood. Just up the street is Wilson's childhood home. Green boards cover the windows, and grass bristles in a little yard. Bella's store is gone. Daisy Wilson is six years in the grave. A lot of people whose voices used to echo on the Hill now echo only in the blood's memory. *Goodnight, goodnight*, says the conjure man. He shakes our hands and tugs his cap and climbs from the car up the stairs of his sister's house. ■

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THIS WILL NOT BE, I hope, another elegy. I have had it up to my neck with pastorals about the grace (see *gazelle*) of center fielders; with madrigals on the bucolic advantages of grass over indoor outdoor carpeting; with sonnets to nuts-scratching, dirt-eating, and phlegm.

Moreover, I am as sick of listening to those who tell me *how* to watch a baseball game as I am sick of those who bellyache that a baseball game is boring. *Don't watch the ball, watch the dance of the infield. He's come inside twice with the heater, now watch him paint the black with the deuce.* Here's my high hard one. stuff a chili dog in your mouth and let me watch!

# *The* GAME

## WITHOUT VIOLINS OR APOLOGIES

And another thing: don't hand me any more guff that baseball is a "literary sport" or a "thinking man's sport." And save me from another colloquy on whether today's players can carry the jockstraps of yesterday's stalwarts; on whether quality starts should be an official stat; on whether a manager makes a win-loss difference of no more than eight or nine games a season.

Oh, yes, and this: Baseball is not a religion. A ball park is not a cathedral. And a second baseman is not a Holy Man.

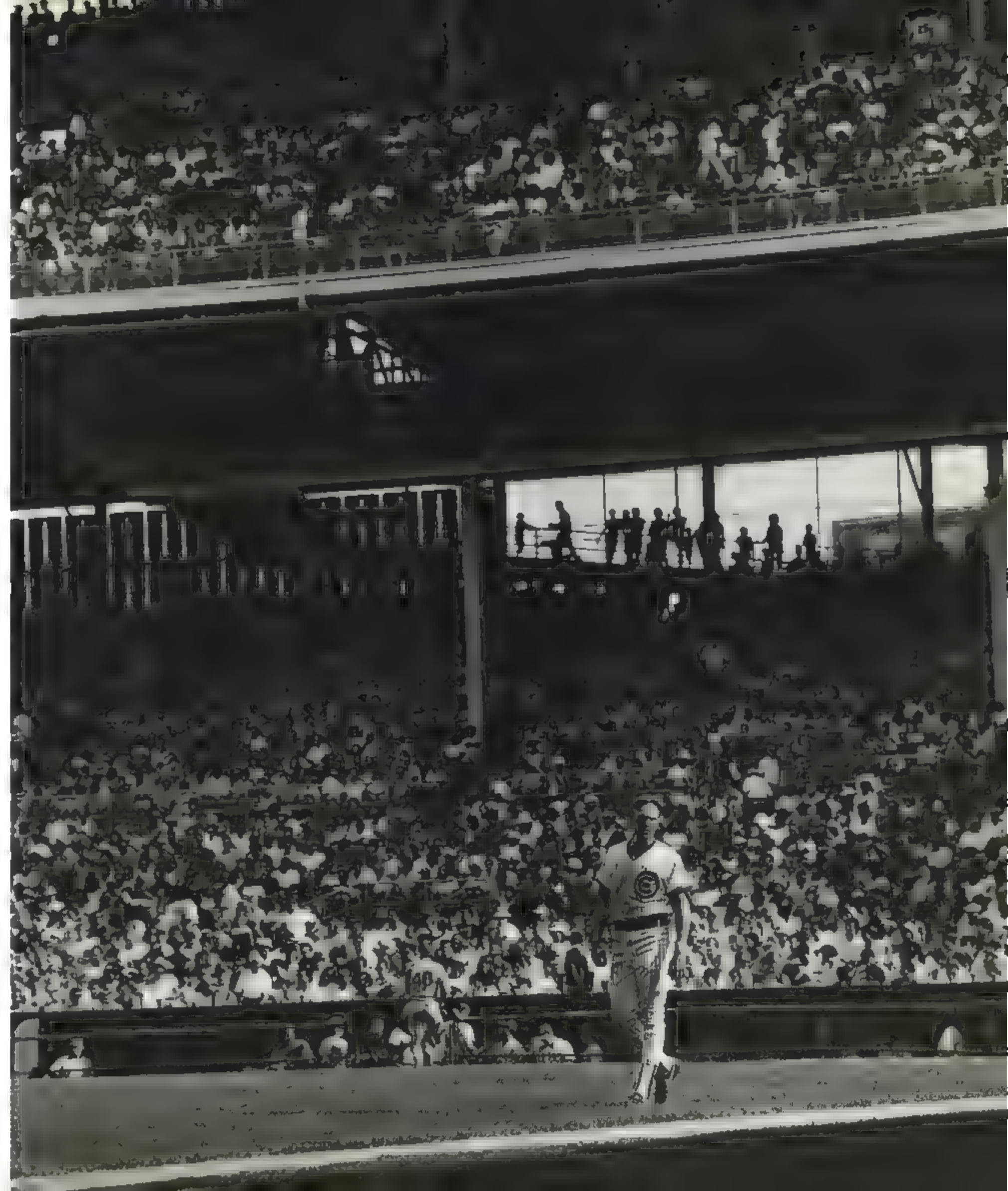
THE FOREGOING ESTABLISHED, let's turn to the single cliché that has enough sweep, arc, wisdom, and truth to matter:

*Baseball is a game of fundamentals.* By this I mean it isn't fancy. It isn't contrived. It isn't trendy.

Baseball is about time, and it's about space, which is about as fundamental as you can get.

Regarding the latter, it is a game of a lot more than inches. Its beauty (mind you, this is not an elegy) lies not in inside moves nor in trench warfare, but in

By LEE EISENBERG Photographs by KURT MARKUS





bursts of action that stretch across an open field or soar through open air. It is a team game, yes, but each of its moments turns on whether an individual player is properly placed, and on whether he has the speed and/or instinct sufficient to get his ass in gear so that he might coincide with the ball. Unlike football, which causes *constriction* (from the thud of behemoth thugs colliding, from the miserable wind and cold), baseball asks us to *expand*. I don't

refer to the seventh inning stretch. Rather, think of how the spirit uncoils when you enter a ball park and lay eyes on the green pasture that ranges forever. Or how a long, arcing fly ball keeps drifting and drifting and, along with it, some ineffable part of you keeps reaching and reaching out to it.

But no more mush! No rumination! The point I want to make is that baseball is a game that gives us our space. That's on the one hand. On the other is this: it is a game whose very essence, whose eternal appeal, is *time*.

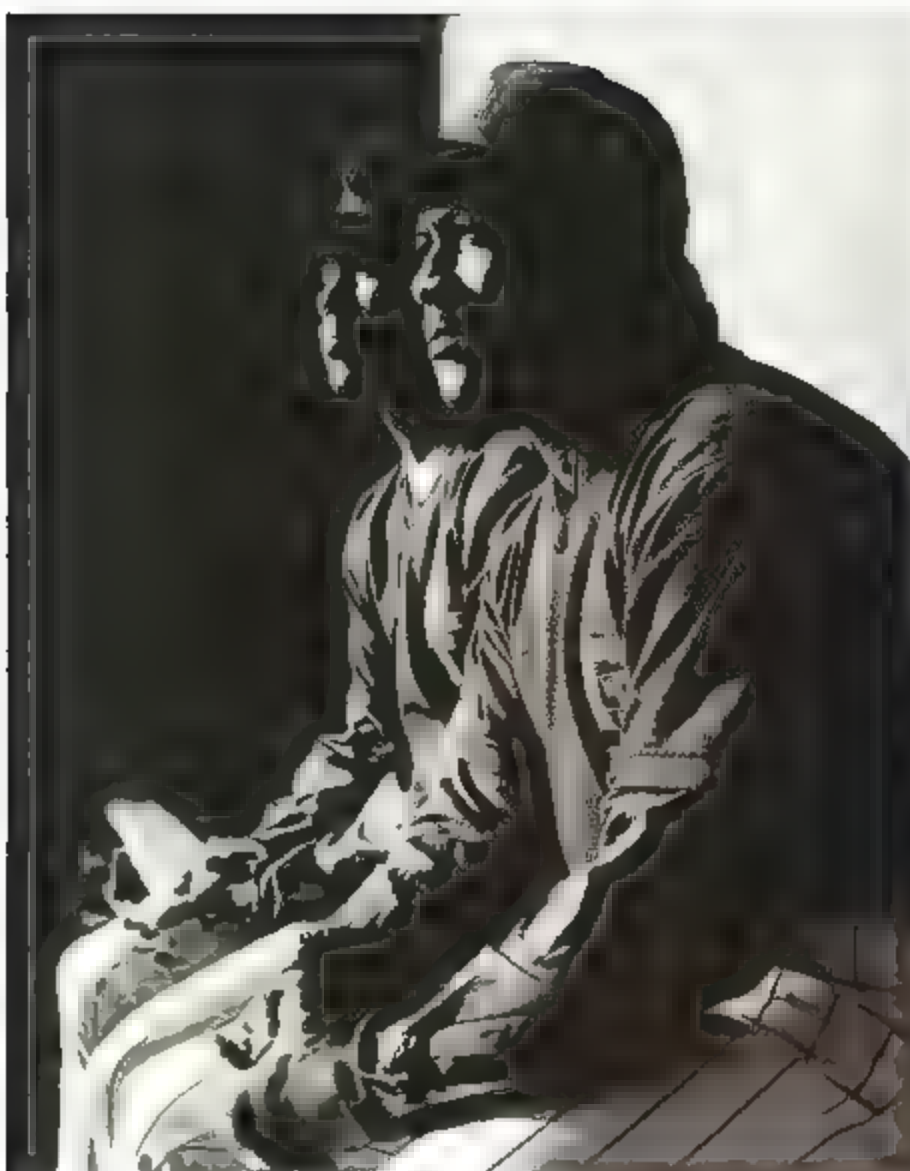
To its fans (and to its detractors), baseball is a game that marches to its own organist. As its laureates are wont to point out, it is the *only* major sport that unwinds without a clock, blah, blah, blah. (And just in case you haven't heard, it isn't over till it's over.)

But all that is beside the matter. When I suggest that baseball is a game whose essence is time, I'm referring to nothing less grandiose than *life time*. For at the end of the day, when the lights go on, baseball is that thing we picked up along the way that we carried with us longer than any other. And I include religion, the love

of a good woman, and just about any hobby you can think of.

Baseball gets into our vitals. Its colors, heroes, and rituals take root in our innards when we are boys. We carry them into adolescence, repress them through puberty, keep them on ice through early manhood, then thaw them out and keep them alive and flourishing until the day we are tucked in under a blanket of *real grass*. Everything else in our lives comes and goes. Baseball endures; it is as innocent as our earliest hero worship and as up-to-the-minute as this morning's box scores.

Baseball is flashback. It is our pure connection to our past. At night during the summer I turn on the radio and I can dial in games from Detroit, Balti-





more, Philadelphia, Cleveland, New York, and Pittsburgh. From each distant outpost, the sound is the same as it ever was. Listening on those summer evenings, I am halfway certain that Dwight Eisenhower is still in the White House. A comforting thought.

Baseball is continuity. I find in the mail an envelope from my godson, who's eight. In it is a snapshot of himself, dressed in a baggy flannel baseball

uniform that belonged to his grandfather in the late Twenties. John, who's a squirt, is leaning on a bat that is almost as tall as he is. On his head is a battered St. Louis Cardinals cap (John worships Ozzie Smith). And on his face is a cocky grin that could light up a minor-league ball park. On the back of the picture he writes, "With best wishes—John Okrent." I decide that one good turn deserves another. So I send him a snapshot of me taken not that long ago, when I attended the Phillies Fantasy Camp. I'm wearing my official red-and-white pinstripe Phillies uniform, number 22, with my name on the back. I have streaks of eyeblack on my face. I was *thirty-six* years old.

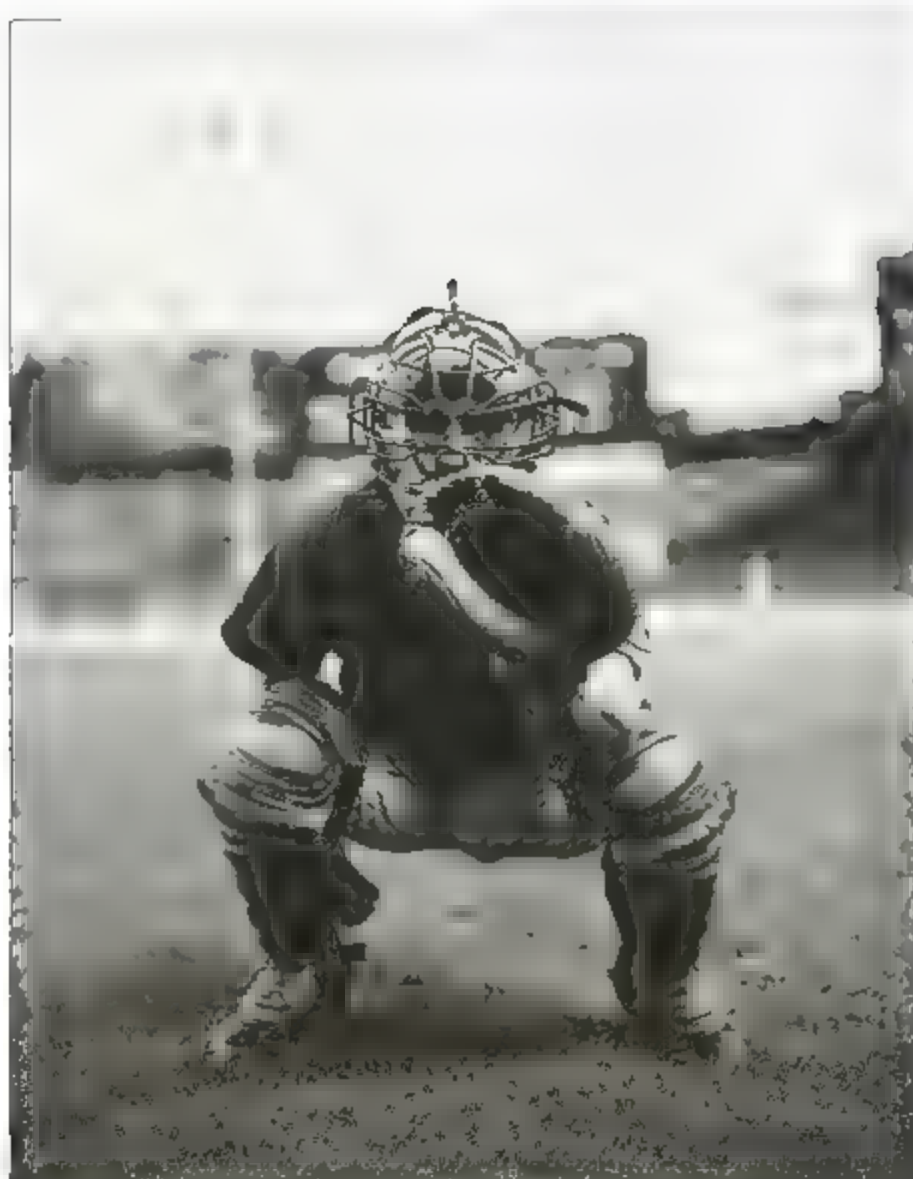
Baseball is not just then, it is now. This very day I open the paper and, before anything else, turn to the sports page. It is a frigid morning in late December, but I'm looking for the warm glow of baseball news. Meager pickings, but something. The Phillies have traded Milt Thompson to St. Louis for Curt Ford and Steve Lake. All right! I spend a solid fifteen minutes speculating on whether the Cards now intend to trade Willie McGee for pitching, and lamenting the desperate

Phillies catching platoon of Daulton and Lake.

This is exactly how a cold morning in winter *should* start, the way I've wanted them to start for as long as I've been able to read.

Baseball was a better first love than my first love. It is an older friend than my oldest friend. Its arrival in April means more to me than my birthday, always has, always will. And even though there have been those in the new America who have tried to wreck it for me—those who divined the DH, designed the new stadiums, double knitted the new uniforms, or turned out elegies—baseball has made good on the faith I've invested in it.

This is one goddamn beautiful game.



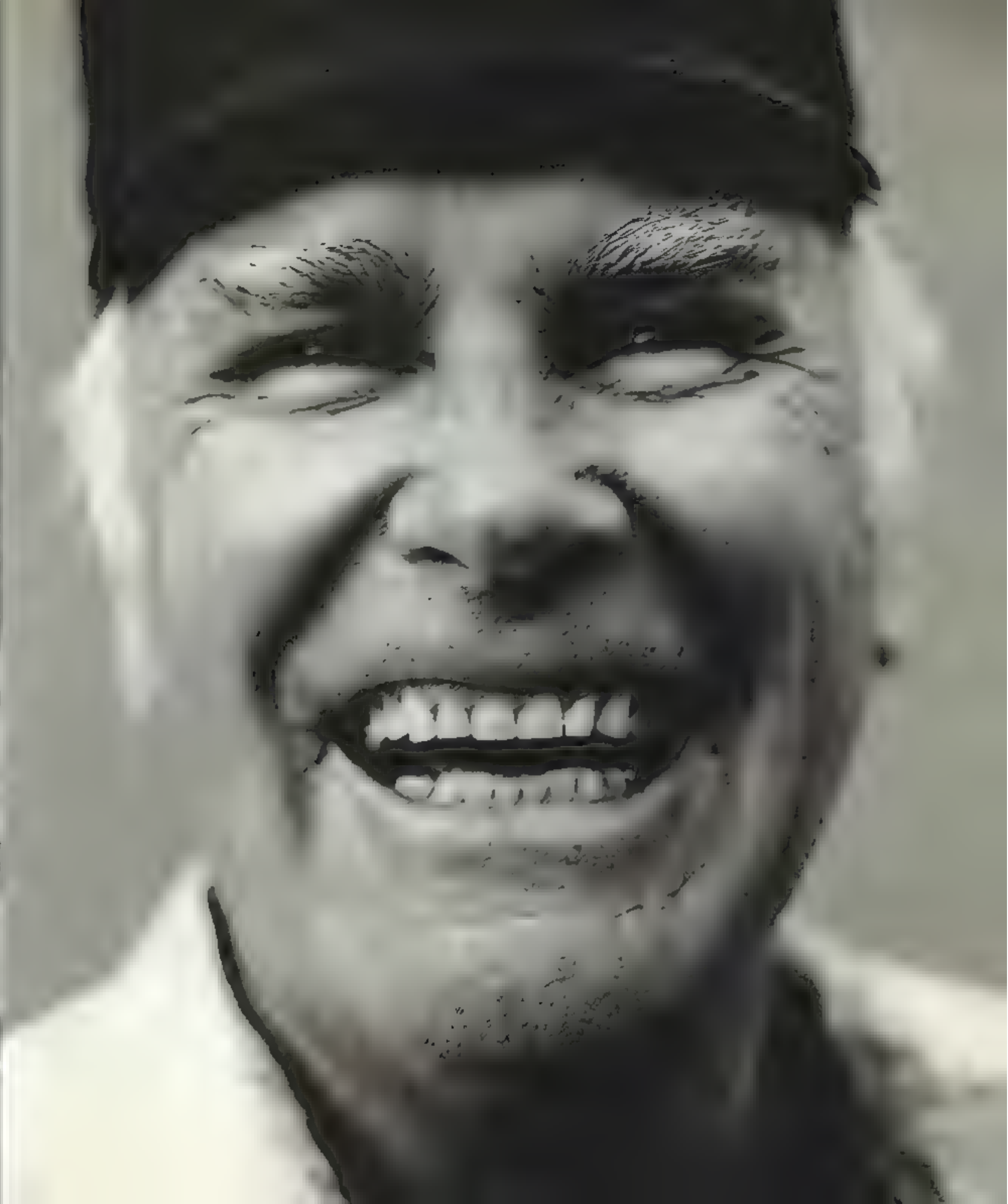














## Women We Love

# ELIZABETH PERKINS

IMAGINE: Aphrodite and Clytemnestra and Medusa and Leda and Antigone, all living within one woman like blood relatives. Each fights her way to the surface at unexpected intervals. The consequences are always unpredictable.

The first time I beheld Betsy was onstage in Chicago in a play of mine called *Gardenia*. Wait till you see her, the director had said. She's too young for the part. She's never played a lead. She's great. I came into the theater during dress rehearsal. The membrane between role and actress did not exist. She just *was* the part. Fierce. Funny. A beauty. And mine.

I traveled a lot by air last fall, and *Big* repeated on four flights. I kept looking up from my book to stare at the woman on the jiggling screen. Who was she? Back on earth, I searched out an ad to learn she was... Elizabeth Perkins! Why hadn't I recognized her? She belonged to me, for a while. But she was Betsy then. Now, well, she was always a woman who could transform herself.

I tracked her down. I guess I had to.

Turns out Betsy spent the last year not working, holed up alone by the beach writing mysterious fables of women in various drastic situations. A woman sailing. A woman in a war. A woman underwater. No one has seen these stories, these myths. But trust me. They'll show up. Her imagination has already begun to add those women to her face. Medea. Circe. Penelope. Try to imagine the reality of being involved with all at the same time. Worth the chance.

—John Guare







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# The HOUSES of a FRENCH SUMMER

*It was the  
kind of  
summer that  
happens  
in a dream*

By  
*James Salter*

WE WERE LOOKING for a house in France somewhere in the country. Near a town that had a restaurant or two and perhaps a tennis court. The Côte d'Azur is all right if you like apartment houses, cars, and half-naked secretaries sunning themselves at noon on the beach at Nice, but despite its glories, it's a place that has been ruined by its beauty. • The search had ground to a halt. There were classified ads, mimeographed

lists, and scribbled bits of paper spread on the desk, but you can no more tell

what a house is like from a photograph and description than you can

tell what a woman is like from her picture on the society

page. We ended up going over ourselves in the middle

of winter to look. At one point a French friend was call-

ing on our behalf. "The house is how?" she asked. •

"What do you mean, how?" the unseen owner said. • "I

mean, what is it like? Is it old or new?" • "Which are you

looking for?" was the cautious reply. • "Old." • "Yes,

it's old. It's ten years old." • "That's not old."

• "Possibly eleven," the owner conceded. • I have al-

ways liked provincial France, the small towns. I like the way

they look and the things that may have happened in them. You read Colette,

an unforgettable fragment like *The Little Bouilloux Girl*, you read Flaubert or De Mon-

therlant or see the films of Malle or Bresson and you are in a narrow world of passion,

venality, and style. • When we finished we had four houses that seemed promising.

James Salter's most recent book is *Dusk and Other Stones* (North Point Press)



Photographs by  
*Sally Gall*

Illustrations  
by Hilary McManus



They were in various parts of France, one down on the coast between Hyères and Saint-Tropez, one in the Dordogne, one a huge place up near the Loire, and the last in a town and *département* I had never even heard of—Gers was the *département* and the old Gallo-Roman hilltop town there was called Lectoure. We couldn't decide between

them, so in the end we simply took them all, each for a month or a little more. They ranged in price from \$850 monthly to \$2,500 for the big house near the Loire. We went over toward the end of April—it was spring but still cold—and came home when the pennant race was in its final weeks. The summer, already legend, had gone.



# LE RAYOL

*On the coast, near Hyères*

THE MAIN ROAD follows the coast, and just past Le Rayol you turn off and go down toward the sea. There are trees and undergrowth on both sides, one or two houses, and just before crossing the right-of-way where a railroad once ran, the gateposts: Villa Santa Helena, somewhere up on the hillside. The driveway gates are locked. Under a piece of broken pottery up near the house, just as promised, the keys are found, but the one to the gates is missing. The baggage has to be carried up endless stone steps as the light fades. Also it turns out that nothing can be done to make the hot-water heater perform.

The next morning the *femme de ménage*, Mme. Rignone, tells me that the gardener has the missing key. She's sure of it, but she doesn't know where he lives. "Il est Arabe," she explains.

A day or two later I heard the faint sound of a hoe down along the path. I went down to see. An old man in a golf cap, a skinny but worthy-looking old man with darkened skin, was at work. I introduced myself and he came forward to accept my handshake. What was his name, I asked?

"Ismael," he said. He had a

cast in one eye and a two-day growth of beard.

He did not have the key to the gate, he said, perhaps the *femme de ménage* had it. I said I'd asked her and she thought he did.

"Non, monsieur," he replied with dignity. The key, he said, was a subject on which he was completely uninformed.

I went back up to the house Ismael. He had tipped his cap as I left and gone back to hoeing. Years ago he had been a child in North Africa. His mother and father were unquestionably dead, and he was working on a hillside in the south of France. He worked at other houses as well. It turned out that he had been in France for thirty-eight years. He knew the woman who had built the house and sold it to its present owners. A few times I saw him in town, usually with another man. They walked along the road slowly, like pensioners.

You know this house, of course. You've seen it in your imagination, meandering, a bit bare, with black and white tiled floors, oddly arranged rooms, damp ceilings, glasses that don't match, and a hand-lettered sign in the w.c. that says ATTENTION and continues with precise instructions, disregard of which

will result in your being "*les xer victimes*."

There are terraces, books with curled covers, canvas chairs, and below on three sides the blue, immortal sea, the sea of Greece and Rome, of Ulysses, the bluest sea on earth.

This is a Bonnard house with a large bathroom like the one in which he painted his nude wife so many times. The tile floor, chilly in the morning, the simple kitchen, living room with its many windows and doors, the small white car in the driveway, the unrushed hours—all pure Bonnard. He painted while the century roared past, the tremendous wars, crises, strikes, collapses, none of these are present in his work. There is no social content, only emotional, and it's that way with Villa Santa Helena, quiet, not a neighbor to be seen.

In the morning the light pours in. The sea is calm and smooth as a mirror, the sky a perfect blue. You can wake here with the woman of your dreams or alone or with two other families in the house and it is still beautiful. No one calls, no one stops by. The *Herald Tribune*, read in ten minutes, lies stuffed in among the logs near the fireplace. Beyond the tall French doors the terrace is darkening, the first drops of rain appear on the glass. The sound of Chopin on the record player floats through the house. *Calme, luxe, volupté* . . .

Around us in a far-flung semicircle are other towns, Saint-Tropez, Grimaud, Hyères, and beyond them, like a Vauban design, the salients: Toulon, Draguignan, Saint-Raphaël. They're comforting—something is out there. After a morning of work you can take a basket of lunch down to the beach and sit in the warm sunshine or go and see the yachts of rich men from the Bahamas in Saint-Tropez or the streets in the old quarter of Hyères, which was the first town in the south of France to attract winter visitors, well-to-do English of course.

The nights, which can be threatening in an isolated house in a foreign land, are the worry, nights without television, dinner







guests, not even a good light to read by. Strangely, they fail to materialize. Instead there is dinner on the veranda at 8:30 or even later, the sky still light, the tops of the sea pines waving gently beneath us, the rugged hills to the west beginning to be crowned by the intense silver light that precedes nightfall.

Stephanie, the blond au pair, is bored, her young blood lapping insistently. One Saturday night she goes off to Le Lavandou. Resorts out of season are melancholy—empty restaurants, closed shutters, not a companion male or female within miles. In the second place she walks into,

though, she sits down, points to something on the menu, and the pianist, seeing she cannot speak French, comes over and finds out she's American. Well, he is, too. She meets an English girl and her French boyfriend and ends up at a disco, pulled out of line because she's good-looking and let in free. Inside, the dance floor is so crowded that all you can do is bob up and down.

In the last part of May the small restaurant on the beach below town opens. The sea picks up a sparkle. Other people appear, Germans and English, white as paper. Summer is at the threshold at last.



# VILLERÉAL

*At the edge of the Dordogne*

IN THE DORDOGNE there is rolling countryside, quiet villages, unspoiled rivers. It's rural in the way France used to be—a rooster walking in the street by the *Mairie*, beautiful houses along the river in Bouziers. Just to see this black, mysterious river from the cliff far above it at Dôme is something to be grateful for all one's life, Henry Miller wrote. He went even further. The Dordogne gave him hope for the future of the race, he said, for the future of the earth itself.

Villeréal is not quite in the Dordogne, it misses by about five kilometers. It's actually in Lot-et-Garonne. The house is an old farmhouse on a property called Barbot, which means either a kind of fish (slightly misspelled), a man who lives off women, or a ladybug, no one knows which it's supposed to be. The town is a kilometer away, the only neighbor is Cica, a slim chestnut mare in a corral down by the river, the Dropt, which

you can almost jump across.

The evening we arrived we went out to find someplace to eat. It was barely 8:30, but everything was closed. Bergerac, half an hour away, seemed the sole possibility, but in the first small town of the Dordogne, Issigeac, the lights of a hotel were on. *Oui, monsieur*, the woman inside said, of course we could eat. There were other people, a waiter in a white jacket, and the dining room had fresh tablecloths. We had a fine dinner and a bottle of the *cuvée de l'hôtel*, which is usually a good thing to ask for. As we drove home I thought, Miller was right, there is hope.

In the morning I went into town to see if I could buy a newspaper. Villeréal is a *bastide*, one of an old group of fortified towns all built to the same general plan, with rectilinear streets and a central market square. It has a population of about 1,300. I entered a place called the *Maison de la Presse*, which had a rack of

French papers, and asked the man at the counter, whose name I later learned was M. Azaro, if he had any foreign papers. Would I like a Dutch paper, he asked? I said I was looking for something in English. *The Daily Express*, he offered? He could get me that. "Can you get the *Herald Tribune*?" I said.

"The what?"  
It turned out he had never heard of the *Herald Tribune*, much less ever having seen a copy. I assured him it was a well-known paper, sold throughout France. He challenged me to find it on his distributor's list, which I did to his astonishment, saying that if he ordered it for me I would take it for a month. He said he would have it on Saturday, or Monday at the latest.

On Saturday I stopped in. An unfocused youth who, as it happened, was Azaro's son, was at the counter. Azaro came out from the back of the store. "It hasn't come," he told me. "It will be here Monday. Do you know where it's printed?"

I didn't, but probably Paris, I told him, and other places too. "It goes all over the world."

"Is it printed in Geneva?" Azaro wanted to know.

"Maybe it's printed in Geneva too."

I had a foreboding as I went into the *Maison de la Presse* on Monday morning. At first Azaro pretended not to see me. I approached him. "Do you have it?" I asked.

"No. It hasn't come." There was a pause. "I believe they are having some difficulty printing it," he said.

I never did see the *Herald Tribune* while we were in Villeréal. It may be sold the world over, but it is not sold there. Later someone told me another story about Azaro, in whose shop, in addition to newspapers, one could buy stationery, fishing gear, and hunting equipment. It was some time after the Chernobyl accident, when fallout drifted over Europe. Bird season had started and customers were buying shotgun shells when someone reading the headlines commented that the paper warned it wasn't safe to eat game birds, be-



cause of possible radioactivity.

"No, no," Azaro assured them, "it's no problem. You just have to cook them a little longer, that's all."

I like rooms with fireplaces, and the farmhouse had four of them, the one in the kitchen large enough for an old woman to sit in by the embers, which in the past they did. On cool evenings a fire was blazing. The great shed along the side of the barn was stacked with wood. The smoke perfumed the broad, graveled courtyard. It was June and yet summer and fall at the same time—the bright skies of summer, the chill and rich smells of autumn.

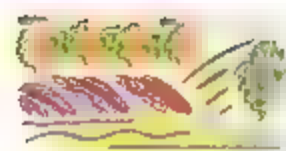
The color is what one loves about this country, the sky, the fields, the biscuity houses and towns. The days are gloriously long. It would be dreary otherwise, since these houses, solid and comforting as they are, are not hives of light. When darkness comes, the French close their shutters, and not the slightest splinter of illumination comes forth. There is darkness in the churches, in the streets, the countryside. In winter it can be depressing, but one does not come to the Dordogne in the winter.

Françoise, the woman who rented us the house, was born in it, and her mother before her, and her grandfather before that. The family has owned the farm since 1812. They grow corn and hay, but there are also several acres of vineyards. The mother, who is a widow, comes almost daily to garden. She wears pants, a tweed jacket, and a jaunty pale fedora, bent over with her hands in the rich earth for hours. Yes, she was born here, she confirms, in the front room that was her parents' room. Her daughter was born in the room in back. She asks me to bring an empty bottle and, unlocking the door of a kind of storage room with a dirt floor, gives me some of their own wine from a large wooden cask.

"Château Barbot," I say.

"Not exactly." She has a wise, honest face. "But it's not bad. Ça passera."

In fact, the wine was one of our only disappointments. We finally had to pour it down the sink.



# CHINON

*Close by the Loire*

GRANDMONT WAS originally a twelfth-century abbey given by Henry II to the monks. It stands among walls and fields and tumbled gates. For more than six hundred years it was in church hands and then was sold in 1790 to a family from Saumur. Later it was owned by a farmer who nearly ruined it.

Here, close to the Loire, which is the most beautiful of all the rivers of France, you are situated in the heart of history. Not half an hour to the east, near Sainte-Maure, is the chalk plateau on which in 732 Charles Martel turned back the overwhelming Arab wave that had swept across Spain and might have drowned all of Europe. Spain itself remained conquered for eight hundred years.

The stones of the house are that old, the deep window embrasures with names from centuries past scratched in the soft stone, the oak beams in the ceiling hewn by hand. The scale and grandeur of the rooms, the timelessness of them, is a physical pleasure. All around lies the forest of Saint-Benoît. There are paths through it—one begins right across the road—but when you walk you must watch out for vipers, the *gardiens*, M. Piffault, says. They're small, no bigger than a pencil, and a dark color. They also like the woodpile, don't reach in boldly for a piece of wood, he says. The *vipères* are poisonous, but there's one thing about them that's useful to know.

"What's that?"

"They do not," he says, "*surtout* they do not like noise."

"Noise?"

"It disturbs them," he says. "When even the grazing sheep come in their direction, the vipers flee. The sound of mastication upsets them."

I accept this, though not as gospel. We never do see one of the snakes.

Chinon, which we usually drive to down a single-lane back road, is about ten minutes away. It's on a river, the Vienne, said to be the cleanest in France. Chinon is the town of Rabelais, *petite ville, grand renom*, he said of it, and the most famous incident of the entire region took place there when Joan of Arc came to present herself to the king and in a huge room of the château, now roofless and almost gone, picked him out from among his gilded courtiers, as one of whom he was disguised. She had never seen him before, of course. In those days, it's astonishing to think, you might see only seventy or eighty people in your entire life.

In every direction are the great châteaux. To the west, Angers and Saumur; to the north, Ussé and Langeais; to the south, Les Ormes, Le Rivau, as well as the town that Richelieu built and named for himself; and to the east the most ringing names of all, Chenonceaux, Azay-le-Rideau, Amboise, Chambord.

It is full, slumbrous July. We swim in the wide, flowing river or come laden from the open market, artichokes the size of melons, wine for fifteen francs a bottle, cheese of every description. Everyone seems friendly, even the dogs. There doesn't seem to be a pedigreed one in the entire town.







# LECTOURE

South of Agen

BENEATH THE huge chestnut tree in the garden and the light bulb hanging from one of its branches is a long, round-ended table made of white plastic. At this table in the shade, morning, afternoon, or evening, we sit. Dragonflies shift languidly along the ground. The wash is drying. The earth has an August haze.

What gives this house its quality are the views. In the distance, with nothing between but fields of sunflowers, meadows, and woods, Lectoure lies along the ridge of a hill like a marvelous abandoned wreck on a far shore. The seasons seem to pass before your eyes, autumn and its rains, winter, long-awaited spring.

Through them the tower of the church with its faint trace of scaffolding stands against the sky. It looks almost Italian, the hospital at one end, the cathedral at the other. Between them is a long stretch of nondescript houses and walls that somehow gives the impression of a foreign coast. It's not a place the Agnellis come to. Occasionally there is a glimpse of an insolent, stunning face driving slowly along the main street, but generally the level of excitement is a man I saw one day outside a café trying to teach a myna bird to sing the "Marseillaise." Still, it is a remarkable town. Along the edges it's like a fishing village, without the sea. That which

stretches out beneath is vast and changeless. There are burnished mastodon teeth gleaming like ivory in the museum beneath the *Mairie*, Roman coins, torsos from antiquity.

Near the end of the month there was a photograph in the newspaper of a nearly empty beach. A couple, the woman topless, were leaning back near their bicycles facing the last of the sun. In the background were a child and a woman in a white dress near the water. On the blurred horizon, a lone white hull and sail. *Finit en beauté*, the headline said of the summer, ends in beauty.

THIS AFTERNOON she came across the grass to where I was working at a small table in the shade. It had been four and a half months, and we had been everywhere, the sea at Arcachon, Paris, Bordeaux, Cap Ferrat, we had sat reading in the garden and walked across the fields to the ancient mill of a neighbor, ten minutes away, to buy bread baked over a wood fire, we had lived in cotton clothes, the backs of our hands were dark, there was one week left. "I love this life," she said softly.

I didn't answer. After a moment I nodded. That said it all. ■





# A LITERARY FRIENDSHIP

*William Styron remembers  
James Jones*

**F**ROM HERE TO ETERNITY was published in 1951 at a time when I was in the process of completing my own first novel. I remember reading *Eternity* while I was living and writing in a country house in Rockland County, not far from New York City, and as has so often been the case with books that have made a large impression on me, I can recall the actual reading—the mood, the excitement, the surroundings. I remember the couch I lay on while reading, the room and the wallpaper, white curtains stirring and flowing in an indolent breeze, and cars that passed on the road outside. I think that perhaps I read portions of the book in other parts of the house, but it is that couch I chiefly recollect and myself sprawled on it, holding the hefty volume aloft in front of my eyes as I remained more or less transfixed through most of the waking hours of several days, in thrall to the story's power, its immediate narrative authority, its vigorously peopled barracks and barrooms, its gutsy humor and its immense, harrowing sadness. The book was about the unknown world of the peacetime army. Even if I hadn't myself suffered some of the outrages of military life, I'm sure I would have recognized the book's stunning authenticity, its burly artistry, its sheer richness as life. A sense of permanence attached itself to the pages. This remarkable quality did not arise from Jones's language, for it was quickly apparent that the author was not a stylist, certainly not the stylist of retinement and nuance that we ex-students of

Creative Writing classes had been led to emulate.

The genial rhythms and carefully wrought sentences that English majors had been encouraged to admire were not on display in *Eternity*, nor was the writing even vaguely experimental; it was so conventional as to be premodern. This was doubtless a blessing. For here was a writer whose urgent, blunt language with its off-key tonalities and hulking emphasis on adverbs wholly matched his subject matter. Jones's wretched outcasts and the narrative voice he had summoned to tell their tale had achieved a near-perfect synthesis. What also made the book a triumph were the characters Jones had fashioned—Prewitt, Warden, Maggio, the officers and their wives, the Honolulu whores, the brig rats, and all the rest. There were none of the wan, tentative effigies that had begun to populate the pages of postwar fiction during its brief span, but human beings of real size and arresting presence, believable and hard to forget. The language may have been coarse-grained but it had Dreiserian force, the people were as alive as those of Dostoyevsky. One other item, somewhat less significant but historic nonetheless, caught my attention, and this was how it had fallen to Jones to make the final breakthrough in terms of vernacular speech that writers—and readers—had been awaiting for hundreds of years. The dread F-word, among several others, so sedulously proscribed by the guardians of decency that even Norman Mailer in his admirable *The Naked and the Dead*, only three years before, had had to fudge the

*In the years  
after World War II,  
there seemed  
to be a moratorium  
on envy.*

BY WILLIAM STYRON



Styron can still recall where he was when he first read Jim Jones's book.

issue with an absurd pseudospelling, was now inscribed on the printed page in the speech pattern of those who normally spoke it. This alone was cause to celebrate, totally aside from the book's incandescent strengths.

It has been said that writers are fiercely jealous of each other. Kurt Vonnegut has observed that most writers display toward one another the edgy mistrust of bears. This may be true, but I do recall that in those years directly following World War II there seemed to be a moratorium on envy, and most of the young writers who were heirs to the Lost Generation developed, for a time at least, a camaraderie, or a reasonable compatibility, as if there were glory enough to go around for all the novelists about to try to fit themselves in Apollonian niches alongside those of the earlier masters. Many of us felt lucky to have survived the war, and the end of the war itself was a convenient point of reckoning, a moment to attempt comparisons. If the Armistice of 1918 had permitted prodigies such as Hemingway, Faulkner, and Fitzgerald to create their collective myth, wouldn't our own war produce a constellation just as passionately committed, as gifted and illustrious? It was a dumb notion (though it often cropped up in book chat), since we had overlooked the inevitable duplicity of history, which would never allow reassembly of those sovereign talents; we would have to settle for the elegant goal of becoming ourselves. But there was tremendous excitement about being a young writer in those days, and of taking part in a shared destiny. When I finished reading *From Here to Eternity* I felt no jealousy at all, only a desire to meet this man, just four years older than myself, who had inflicted on me such emotional turmoil in the act of telling me authentic truths about an underside of American life I barely knew existed. I wanted to talk to the writer who had dealt so eloquently with those lumpen warriors, and who had created scenes that tore at the guts. And then there was that face on the dust jacket, the same face that had glowered at me from bookstore displays and magazine covers and newspaper articles. Was there ever such a face, with its Beethovenesque brow and lantern jaw and stepped-upon-looking nose—a forbidding face until one realized that it only *seemed* to glower, since the eyes really projected a

**William Styron** is the author of *Lie Down in Darkness*, *The Confessions of Nat Turner*, and *Sophie's Choice*. This is excerpted from his introduction to *To Reach Eternity: The Letters of James Jones*, edited by George Hendrick, which will be published by Random House next month.





## BEFORE ETERNITY

Robinson, III.  
June 23, 1947

Dear Mr Perkins,

Sorry not to have answered your letter before. It certainly was a fine one. And it means considerable to me. You seem to have a certain intangible intuitive faculty that is of tremendous help, without ever actually being anything you can put your finger on.

...I am working fine now and feeling high. God, there is no abyss like that of a writer who wants to write but cant and sits around all day wanting to write and not able to and every word he types is horrible. The X factor in all art.

I think the key was in your other letter where you mentioned the intuitive woman writer and in Henri's comments about the Yogis and that the thing was to attain the "trance state" first and that then the art was a natural result. I think I've been, as you said with the man tossing his hat, trying to calculate and figure too much. I've stopped that now and am trying not to worry and just let it come out, because apparently it all is there, in your mind, in the subconscious, and the trick is to throw your conscious mind out of gear and just let it flow thru.

...I still plan on coming to New York when my bonus comes through, and I have to report for a pension exam next month. My pension is what I've been living on for the last six months, practically. If I should lose it I don't know what I'd do for living expenses.

...I've been working on some stories the past few months. When I couldn't work on the book, and was stymied, I would work on one of these for a week or two. I have five completed now, all of them good, and one of them which I think is just about the best story I've ever read. I think it beats "The Undeclared," because this story has more of a universal sense of the world's problems, tied in with those of the characters. And I think it beats "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," simply because that story, which is the best I've ever read I think, is a sort of freak story without the universal appeal that makes every reader think: this happened to me. I call it "The Way It Is," and it's a war story.

...Here's how good that one story is: When I get blue and low and cannot write I sit down and read it over again and I am high again because I know I wrote it. It has a sense of action in it, a sense of this happening now instead of being a story about what happened then, that is something I've been trying to achieve for a long time and never did before, and haven't very often since.

I certainly want to come to New York, at least for a while to see you, I feel there is so much I can learn from you that will help me, but I would rather wait at least until I have enough of these stories to make a book. I feel that I have not earned it yet, sort of.

I'm working on a scene now, or rather a series of them, with Maggio and Prewitt and two queers where Maggio gets sent up because he's drunk and the MPs beat him up. And it's running into well over 30 pp without a break and not half done. But I'm not letting it bother me because I can fit it in later somehow I'm sure. And it is truly very wonderful writing.

sincerely,  
Jones

Note: James Jones's last letter to Maxwell Perkins arrived after the editor's death.

skeptical humor that softened the initial impression of rage. Although, as I later discovered, Jim Jones contained plenty of good clean American rage.

When I first met Jim, during the fall of that year, *Lie Down in Darkness* had been recently published and we were both subjected to a considerable amount of not unpleasant lionization. Jim was a super-lion; his book, after these many months, was still riding high on the best-seller lists. He had achieved that Nirvana which, if I may tell a secret, all writers privately cherish—critical acclaim and popular success. My book, on a much more modest level, had also done well critically and commercially, and in fact there was a period of several months during 1951 when still another first novel destined for some durability shared the best-seller list with Jim's and mine—*The Catcher in the Rye*. But Jim's celebrity status was extraordinary, and the numbus of stardom that attended his presence as we tripped together from party to party around Manhattan was testimony to the appeal of those unforgettable looks but also to something deeper: the work itself, the power of a novel to stir the imagination of countless people as few books had in years. Moving about at night with Jim was like keeping company with a Roman emperor. Indeed, I may have been a little envious, but the man had such raw magnetism and took such uncomplicated pleasure in his role as the midwestern hick who was now the cynosure of Big Town attention, that I couldn't help being tickled by the commotion he caused, and his glory, he'd certainly earned it. It was a period when whiskey—great quantities of it—was the substance of choice. We did a prodigious amount of drinking, and there were always flocks of girls around, but I soon noticed that the hedonistic whirl had a way of winding down, usually late at night, when Jim, who had seemingly depthless stamina, would head for a secluded corner of a bar and begin speaking about books, about writers and writing. And we'd often talk long after the booze had been shut off and the morning light seeped through the windows.

Jim was serious about fiction in a way that now seems a little old-fashioned and ingenuous, with the novel for him in magisterial reign. He saw it as sacred mission, as icon, as Grail. Like so many American writers of distinction, Jim had not been granted the benison of a formal education, but like these dropouts he had done a vast amount of impassioned and eclectic reading; thus while there were gaps in his literary background that college boys like me had filled (the whole long curriculum of English and American poetry, for instance), he had ab-

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BY GARY STAMEISEN



Gary Stameisen is a two-time national landyacht sailing champion, and is currently preparing an assault on the landyacht world speed record. Landyachts have exceeded speeds of over 100 mph.

"I just finished reading the latest issue of one of those sailing magazines and, once again, I'm really steamed.

"I mean, to read some of these boat shoe ads, you might think the only place people sail is Santa Monica Bay or the Gulf of Mexico or Lake Michigan or something.

"They call that sailing? Let me tell you something. I've seen armadillos move faster than some of those glorified bathtubs they call sailboats. I mean, I know that three-quarters of the earth's surface is covered with water, but come on, guys. Some of us do spend a little time out here on the other quarter, you know.

"You can imagine my delight, then, when I picked up a pair of these Navigator boat shoes back in town the other day.

"Okay, okay. I'll be honest. If I sailed on water, I'd still really love these shoes. They've got all kinds of good stuff. Water repellent leather. Salt resistant eyelets. Water escape

channels on the bottoms.

"But I'll tell you where these babies really leave all those other boat shoes in the dust—the way they feel on dry land.

"I'm here to tell you, these shoes are every bit as comfortable cruising around the desert as they are cruising around the Pacific or whatever.

"For one thing, they've got something called a 'luxury liner'—cute, huh?—that gives the shoe extra cushioning and flexibility. Not to mention handsewn construction and a cushioned leather footbed.

"All of which leads me to wonder. If Dexter could come up with a shoe that feels as good on land as it does on water, how come everybody else missed the boat?"



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sorbed an impressive amount of writing for a man whose schoolhouse had been at home or in a barracks. He had been, and still was, a hungry reader, and it was fascinating in those dawn sessions to hear this fellow built like a welterweight boxer (which he had occasionally been) speak in his gravelly drill sergeant's voice about a few of his more recherché loves—Virginia Woolf was one, I recall, Edith Wharton another. I didn't agree with Jim much of the time, but I usually found that his tastes and his judgments were, on their own terms, gracefully discriminating and astute. He had stubborn prejudices, though—a blind spot, I thought, about Hemingway. He grudgingly allowed that Hemingway had possessed lyric power in his early stories, but most of his later work he deemed phony to the core. It filled him with that rage I mentioned, and I would watch in wonder as his face darkened with a scowl as grim as Caliban's, and he'd denounce Papa as a despicable fraud and poseur.

It sounded like overkill. Was this some irrational competitive obsession, I wondered, the insecure epigone putting down the master? But I soon realized that in analyzing his judgments about Hemingway I had to set purely literary considerations aside and understand that a fierce and by no means aimless, or envy-inspired, indignation energized Jim's view. Basically it had to do with men at war. For Jim had been to war, he had been wounded on Guadalcanal, had seen men die, had been sickened and traumatized by the experience. Hemingway had been to war, too, and had been wounded, but despite the gloss of misery and disenchantment that overlaid his work, Jim maintained, he was at heart a war lover, a macho contriver of romantic effects, and to all but the gullible and wishful the lie showed glaringly through the fabric of his books and in his life. He therefore had committed the artist's chief sin by betraying the truth. Jim's opinion of Hemingway, justifiable in its harshness or not, was less significant than what it revealed about his own view of existence, which at its most penetrating—as in *From Here to Eternity*, and later in *The Pistol* and *The Thin Red Line*—was always seen through the sol-

dier's eye, in a hallucination where the circumstances of military life cause men to behave mostly like beasts and where human dignity, while welcome and often redemptive, is not the general rule. Jones was among the best anatomists of warfare in our time, and in his bleak, extremely professional vision he continued to insist that

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war was a congenital and chronic illness from which we would never be fully delivered. War rarely ennobled men and usually degraded them; cowardice and heroism were both celluloid figments, generally interchangeable, and such grandeur as could be salvaged from the mess lay at best in pathos in the haplessness of men's mental and physical suffering. Living or dying in war had nothing to do with valor, it had to do with luck. Jim had endured very nearly the worst, he had seen death face-to-face. At least partially as a result of this he was quite secure in his masculinity and better able than anyone I've known to detect muscle-bound pretense, empty bravado. It's fortunate that he did not live to witness Rambo, or our high-level infatuation with military violence. It would have brought out the assassin in him.

I went to Europe soon after this and was married, and Jim and I were not in close contact for several years. When we got together again, in New York during the wan-

ing 1950s, he, too, was married and it was his turn to shove off for Europe, where he settled in Paris, and where he and Gloria remained for the better part of the rest of his life. We saw each other on his frequent trips to the United States, but my visits to Paris were even more frequent during the next fifteen years or so, and it is Paris, nearly always Paris, where I locate Jim whenever I conjure him up in memory. Year in and out—sometimes with my wife, Rose, sometimes alone—I came to roost in the Joneses' marvelous lodgings overlooking the Seine on the Île Saint-Louis, often freeloading (*à l'anglaise*, observed Gloria, who took a dim view of the British) so long that I acquired the status of a semipermanent guest. My clearest and still most splendid image is that of the huge vaulted living room and the ceiling-high doors that gave out onto the river with its hypnotic, incessant flow of barge traffic moving eastward past the stately ecclesiastic rump of Notre-Dame. The room was lined with books, but an entire wall was dominated by the nearly one hundred thickly hulking, drably bound volumes of the official United States government history of the Civil War. The very thought of shipping that library across the Atlantic was numbing. What Jim sometimes called Our Great Fraternal Massacre was his enduring preoccupation, and he had an immense store of knowledge about its politics, strategies, and battles. Somehow, in the lofty room the dour Victorian tomes didn't really obtrude, yet they were a vaguely spectral presence and always reminded me how exquisitely American Jim was destined to remain during his years in Paris. War and its surreal lunacy would be his central obsession to the end and would also be that aspect of human experience he wrote best about.

Into this beautiful room with its flood of pastel Parisian light, with its sound of Dave Brubeck or Brahms, there would come during the Sixties and early Seventies a throng of admirable and infamous characters, ordinary and glamorous and weird people—writers and painters and movie stars, starving Algerian poets, drug addicts, Ivy League scholars, junketing United States senators, thieves, jockeys, big names from the American media (fidgety and morose in their sudden vacuum of anonymity), tycoons, and paupers. It was said that even a couple of Japanese tourists made their confused way there, en route to the Louvre. No domicile ever attracted such a steady stream of visitors, no hosts ever extended uncomplainingly so much largess to the deserving and the worthless alike. It was not a rowdy place—Jim was too soldierly to fail to maintain reasonable decorum—but like the Abbey of Theleme of Rabelais, in which

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visitors were politely bidden to do what they liked, guests in the house at 10, Quai d'Orléans were phenomenally relaxed, sometimes to the extent of causing the Joneses to be victimized by the very waiters they had befriended. A great deal of antique silver disappeared over the years, and someone quite close to Jim once told me they reckoned he had lost tens of thousands of dollars in bad debts to smooth white-collar panhandlers. If generosity can be a benign form of pathology, Jim and Gloria were afflicted by it, and their trustfulness extended to their most disreputable servants, who were constantly ripping them off. One, an insolent Pakistani houseman whom Gloria had longed to fire but had hesitated doing so out of tenderheartedness, brought her finally to her senses when she glimpsed him one evening across the floor of a tony nightclub, bewigged and stunningly garbed in one of her newly bought Dior gowns. Episodes like that were commonplace chez Jones in the tumultuous Sixties.

There were literary journalists of that period who enjoyed pointing to a certain decadence in the Joneses' lifestyle and wrote reproachful monographs about the way that Jim and Gloria (now parents of two children) comported themselves: dinners at Maxim's, afterdinner with the fat squabs at hangouts like Castel's, vacations in Deauville and Biarritz, yachting in Greece, the races at Longchamp, the oiled and pampered sloth of Americans in moneyed exile. Much the same had been written about Fitzgerald and Hemingway. The tortured puritanism that causes Americans to mistrust their serious artists and writers, and regards it as appropriate when they are underpaid, evokes even greater mistrust when they are paid rather well, and, to boot, hobnob with the Europeans. Material success is still not easily forgiven in a country that ignored Poe and abandoned Melville. There was also the complaint that in moving to France for such a long sojourn Jim Jones had cut off his roots, thus depriving himself of the rich fodder of American experience necessary to produce worthwhile work. But this would seem to be a hollow objection, quite aside from the kind of judgmental chauvin-

ism it expresses. Most writers have stored up, by their midtwenties, the emotional and intellectual baggage that will supply the needs of their future work, and the various environments into which they settle, while obviously not negligible as sources of material and stimulation, don't really count for all that much. Jim wrote some ex-

*Jim loved the good life. He would have richly enjoyed himself anywhere and would have, as always, worked like hell. But a common failing of writers is they often choose their themes and subject matter as poorly as they often choose wives or houses.*

ceedingly inferior work during his Paris years. *Go to the Widow-Maker*, which dealt mainly with underwater adventure—a chaotic novel of immeasurable length, filled with plywood characters, implausible dialogue, and thick wedges of plain atrocious writing—spun me into despondency when I read it. There were, to be sure, some spectacular underwater scenes and moments of descriptive power almost like the Jones of *Eternity*. But in general the work was a disappointment, lacking both grace and cohesion.

Among the distressing things about it was its coming in the wake of *The Thin Red Line*, a novel of major dimensions whose rigorous integrity and disciplined art allowed Jim once again to exploit the military world he knew so well. Telling the story of GIs in combat in the Pacific, it is squarely in the gritty, no-holds-barred tradition of American realism, a genre that even in 1962, when the book was published, would have seemed oafishly out of

date had it not been for Jim's mastery of the narrative and his grasp of the sunbaked milieu of bloody island warfare, which exerted such a compelling hold on the reader that he seemed to breathe new life into the form. Romain Gary had commented about the book. "It is essentially an epic love poem about the human predicament, and like all great books it leaves one with a feeling of wonder and hope." The rhapsodic note is really not all that overblown; upon rereading, *The Thin Red Line* stands up remarkably well, one of the best novels written about American fighting men in combat. Comparing it, however, with *Go to the Widow-Maker* produced a depressing sense of retrogression and loss. It was like watching a superb diver who, after producing a triple somersault of championship caliber, leaps from the board again and splatters himself all over an empty pool. Jim's nettled response to my hesitantly negative criticism, set down in one of his letters, makes me glad that I never expressed my real feelings or my actual chagrin, he might have wanted to strangle me.

But it is important to point out that while *Go to the Widow-Maker* was written in Paris, so was *The Thin Red Line*. This would strongly suggest that the iniquitous life that Jim Jones had reputedly led in Paris, the years of complacent and unengaged exile, bore little relation to his work, and that if he had stayed at home the motivations that impelled him in a particular literary direction, and that shaped his creative commitments, would probably have remained much the same. Jim loved the good life. He would have richly enjoyed himself anywhere and would have, as always, worked like hell. But a common failing of many writers is that they often choose their themes and address their subject matter as poorly as they often choose wives or houses. What is really significant is that while a book like *Go to the Widow-Maker* represents one of those misshapen artifacts that virtually every good writer, in the sad and lonely misguidedness of his calling, comes up with sooner or later, *The Thin Red Line* is a brilliant example of what happens when a novelist summons strength from the deepest wellsprings of his inspiration. In this book, along with *From Here to Eternity* and *Whistle*—a work of many powerful scenes that suffered from the fact that he was dying as he tried, unsuccessfully, to finish it—Jim obeyed his better instincts by attending to that forlorn figure whom in all the world he cared for most, and understood better than any writer alive—the common foot soldier, the grungy enlisted man.

Romain Gary wasn't too far off. There was a certain grandeur in Jones's vision of

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the soldier. Other writers had written of outcasts in a way that had rendered one Godforsaken group or another into archetypes of suffering—Dickens's underworld, Zola's whores, Jean Genet's thieves, Steinbeck's migrant workers, Agee's white southern sharecroppers, Richard Wright's black southern immigrants, on and on—the list is honorable and long. Jones's soldiers were at the end of an ancestral line of fictional characters who are misfits, the misbegotten who always get the short end of the stick. But they never dissolved into a social or political blur. The individuality that he gave to his people, and the stature he endowed them with, came, I believe, from a clear-eyed view of their humanness, which included their ugliness or meanness. Sympathetic as he was to his enlisted men, he never lowered himself to the temptations of an agitprop that would turn them as mere victims. Many of his soldiers were creeps, others were outright swine, and there were enough good guys among the officers to be consonant with reality. At least part of the reason he was able to pull all this off so successfully without illusions or sentimentality was his sense of history, along with his familiarity with the chronicles of war that were embedded in world literature. He had read Thucydides early, and he once commented to me that no one could write well about warfare without him. He'd also linked his own emotions with those of Tolstoy's peasant soldiers, and could recite a substantial amount of *Henry V*, whose yeoman warriors were right up his alley. But the shades of the departed with whom he most closely identified were the martyrs of the American Civil War. That pitiless and aching slaughter, which included some of his forebears, haunted him throughout his life and provided one of the chief goads to his imagination. To be a Civil War buff was not to be an admirer of the technology of battle, although campaign strategy fascinated him, it was to try to plumb the mystery and the folly of war itself.

In 1962, during one of his visits to America, I traveled with Jim to Washington. An influential official with whom I was friendly and who was on President Kennedy's staff had invited the two of us to take a special tour of the White House. Oddly, for such a well-traveled person, Jim had never been to Washington, and the trip offered him a chance to visit the nearby battlefields. He had never seen any of the Civil War encampments. Jim went out to Antietam, in Maryland, after which we planned to go to the Lincoln Memorial before driving over to the White House. When he met me at our hotel, just after the Antietam visit, Jim was exceptionally somber. Some-

thing at the battlefield had resonated in a special troubling way within him; he seemed abstracted and out of sorts. It had been, he told me finally, a part of the battleground called the Bloody Lane that had so affected him when he'd seen it. He'd read so much about the sector and the engagement, and had always wondered how the terrain would appear when he viewed it firsthand. A rather innocuous-looking place now, he said, a mere declivity in the landscape, sheltered by a few trees. But there, almost exactly a century before, some of the most horrible carnage in the history of warfare had taken place, thousands of men on both sides dead within a few hours. The awful shambles was serene now, but the ghosts were still there, swarming; it had shaken him up.

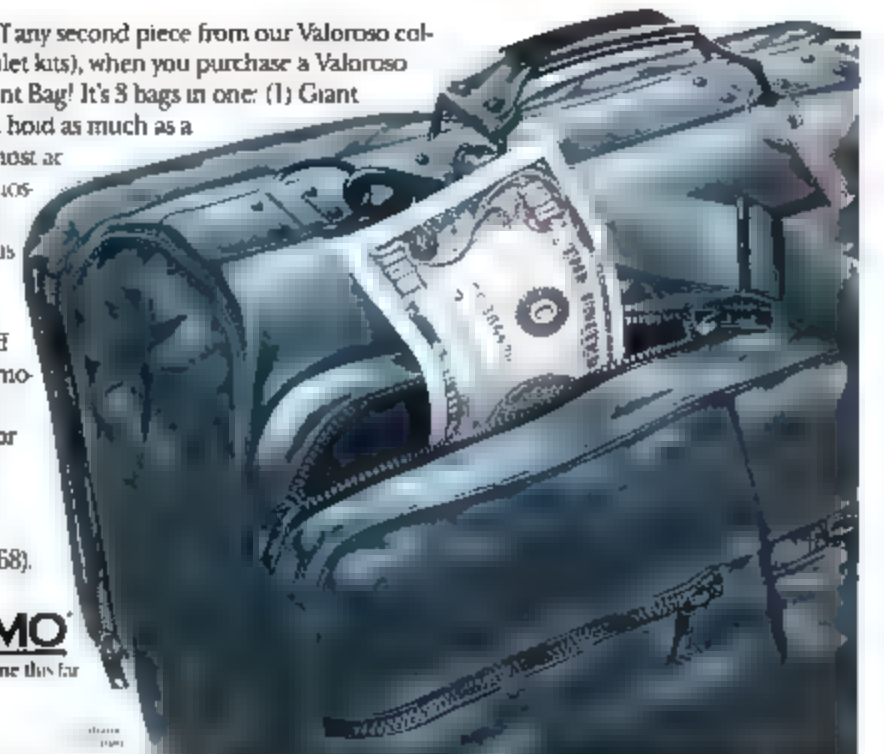
Soon after this, at the Lincoln Memorial, I realized that the cavernous vault with its hushed and austere shadows, its soft footfalls and requiem whispers, might not have been the best place to take a man in such a delicate mood. Jim's face was set like a slab, his expression murky and aggrieved, as we stood on the marble reading the Gettysburg Address engraved against one lofty wall, slowly scanning those words of supreme magnanimity and conciliation and brotherhood dreamed by the fellow Illinoisan whom Jim had venerated, as almost everyone does, for transcendental reasons that needed not to be analyzed or explained in such a sacred hall. I suppose I was expecting the conventional response from Jim, the pious hum. But his reaction, soft-spoken, was loaded with savage bitterness, and for an instant it was hard to absorb. "It's just beautiful bullshit," he blurted. "They all died in vain. They all died in vain. And they always will!" His eyes were moist with fury and grief; we left abruptly, and it required some minutes of emotional readjustment before the storm had blown over and he regained his composure, apologizing quickly then returning with good cheer and jokes to more normal concerns.

Many years went by before I happened to reflect on that day, and to consider this: that in the secret cellars of the White House, in whose corridors we were soon being shepherded around pleasantly, the ancient mischief was newly germinating. There were doubtless all sorts of precursory activities taking place that someday would confirm Jim's fierce prophecy: heavy cable traffic to Saigon, directives beefing up advisory and support groups, ominous memos on Diem and the Nhu, orders to units of the Green Berets. The shadow of Antietam, and of all those other blind upheavals, was falling on our own times. James Jones would be the last to be surprised. ☐

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KURT MARKUS

*This page  
White cotton shawl-  
collar sweater  
with navy trim by  
Nautica  
Sunglasses by Oliver  
Peoples at  
Morgenthal-Frederics*

*Left Navy  
cashmere cardigan by  
Lyle & Scott.  
Cream cashmere polo  
by Malo. Striped  
linen trousers by New  
Republic Clothier*







*This page.  
Linen and-rayon zip-  
front jacket by  
Basco. Sand cotton-and-  
linen cable-knit  
sweater and linen shirt  
by British Khaki*

*Right. Washed-  
leather single-breasted  
sport jacket by  
Hugo Boss. Linen shirt  
by Bill Robinson.  
Leather belt by Coach.*





This page:  
Striped cotton-knit  
mock turtleneck  
by Crossings. Pleated  
linen trousers by  
Kuff Hewn. Leather  
belt by Henry  
Cotton's.

Right: Silk-  
lined single-breasted  
sport jacket, —  
cotton broadcloth shirt  
and gabardine  
trousers by Polo by  
Ralph Lauren.  
Alligator belt by Polo  
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GEORGE HURRELL

177

APRIL 1989 Esquire



# The Last Generation

Every day after school,  
Audrey and Tommy waited for  
the end of the world

By Joy Williams

Paintings by Walton Ford

HE WAS NINE.

"Nine," his father would say, "there's an age for you. When I was nine..." and so on.

His father's name was Walter. He had a seventeen-year-old brother named Walter Jr. and he was Tommy. The boys had no mother, she had been killed in a car wreck a while before.

It had not been her fault.

Tommy's father was a mechanic at a Chevrolet garage in Tallahassee. His foot had been mangled in a lift there once so that he now walked with a limp, in a ragged, wide-hipped way. The mother had taken care of houses that people rented on the river. She cleaned them and managed them for the owners. Just before she died, there had been this one house and the toilet got stopped up. I told the plumber, Tommy's mother told them, that I wanted to know just what was in that toilet because I didn't trust those tenants. I knew there was something deliberate there, not normal. I said, you tell me what you find there, and when he called back he said, well, you wanted to know what I found there and it was fat meat and paper towels.

She had been very excited about what the plumber had told her. Tommy worried that his mother had still been thinking

about this when she died—that she had been driving along, still marveling about it—fat meat and paper towels!—and that then she had been struck, and died.

She had slowed for an emergency vehicle with its lights flashing that was tearing through an intersection and a truck had crashed into her from behind. The emergency vehicle had a destination but there hadn't been an emergency at the time. It was supposed to be stationed at the stock-car races and it was late. The races—the first of the season—were just about to begin at the time of the wreck. Walter Jr. was sitting in the old bleachers with a girl, waiting for the start, and the announcer had just called for the drivers to fire up their engines. There had been an immense roar in the sunny, dusty field, and a great cloud of insects had flown up from the rotting wood of the bleachers. The girl beside Walter Jr. had screamed and spilled her Coke all over him. There had been thousands of the insects, which were long red flying ants of some sort with transparent wings.

Tommy had not seen the alarming eruption of insects. He had been home, putting

Joy Williams's new collection of stories will be published early next year by Atlantic Monthly Press





together a little car from a kit and painting it with silver paint.

Tommy liked rope. Sometimes he ate dirt. Fog thrilled him. He was small for his age, a weedy child. He wore blue jeans with deeply rolled cuffs for growth, although he grew slowly. Weeks often went by when he did not grow. He wore white, rather formal shirts.

The house they lived in on the river was a two-story house with a big porch, surrounded by trees. There was a panel in the ceiling that gave access to a particularly troublesome water pipe. The pipe would leak whenever it felt like it but not at the time. Apparently it had been placed by the builders on such an angle that it could neither be replaced nor repaired. Walter had placed a bucket in the space between the floors above Tommy's ceiling to catch water, and this he emptied every few weeks. Tommy believed that some living thing existed up there that needed water as all living things do, some quiet, listening, watching thing that shared his room with him. At the same time, he knew there was nothing there. Walter would throw the water from the bucket into the yard. It was important to Tommy that he always be there to see the bucket being brought down, emptied, then replaced.

In the house, with other photographs, was a photograph of Tommy and his mother, taken when he was six. It had been taken on the bank of the river, the same river the rest of them still lived on, but not the same place. This place had been farther upstream. Tommy was holding a fish by the tail. His mother was fat and had black hair and she was smiling at him and he was looking at the fish. He was holding the fish upside down and it was not very large, but it was large enough to keep, apparently. Tommy had been told that he had caught the fish and that his mother had fried it up just for him in a pan with butter and salt and that he had eaten it, but Tommy could remember none of this. What he remembered was that he had found the fish, which was not true.

Tommy loved his mother but he didn't miss her. He didn't like his father, Walter, much, and never had. He liked Walter Jr.

Walter Jr. had a moustache and his own Chevy truck. He liked to ride around at night with his friends and sometimes he would take Tommy on these rides. The big

boys would drink beer and holler at people in Ford trucks and, in general, carry on as they tore along the river roads. Once Tommy saw a fox, and once they all saw a naked woman in a lighted window. The headlights swept past all kinds of things. One night, one of the boys pointed at a mailbox.

"See that mailbox. That's a three-hundred-dollar mailbox."



"Mailbox can't be three hundred dollars," one of the other boys screamed.

"I seen it advertised. It's totally indestructible. Door can't be pulled off. Ya hit it with a ball bat or a two-by-four, it just busts up the wood, don't hurt the box. Toss an M-80 in there, won't hurt the box."

"What's an M-80?" Tommy asked.

The big boys looked at him.

"He don't know what an M-80 is," one of them said.

Walter Jr. stopped the truck and backed it up. They all got out and stared at the mailbox. "What kind of mail you think these people get anyway?" Walter Jr. said.

The boys pushed at the box and peered inside. "It's just asking for it, isn't it," one of the boys said. They laughed and shrugged, and one of them pissed on it. Then they got back in the truck and drove away.

Walter Jr. had girlfriends too. For a time, his girl was Audrey, only Audrey. Audrey had thick hair and very white, smooth skin and Tommy thought she was beautiful. Together, he thought, she and his brother were like young gods who made the world after many trials and tests, accomplishing

everything only through wonders, only through self-transformations. In reality, the two were quite an ordinary couple. If anything, Audrey was peculiar looking, even ugly.

"If you marry my brother, I'll be your brother-in-law," Tommy told her.

"Ha," she said.

"Why don't you like me?" He adored her, he knew she had some power over him.

"Who wants to know?"

"Me. I want to know Tommy."

"Who's that?" And she would laugh, twist him over, hang him upside down by the knees so he swung like a monkey, dump him on his feet again, and give him a stale stick of gum.

Then Walter Jr. began going out with other girls.

"He dropped me," Audrey told Tommy, "just like that."

It was the end of the summer that his mother had died at the start of. Her clothes still hung in the closet. Her shoes were there, too, lined up. It was the shoes that looked as though they most expected her return. Audrey came over every day and she and Tommy would sit on the porch of the house on the river in two springy steel chairs painted piggy pink. Audrey told him,

"You can't trust anybody," and

"Don't agree to anything."

When Walter Jr. walked by, he never glanced at her. It was as though Audrey wasn't there. He would walk by whistling, his hair dark and crispy, his stomach flat as a board. He wore sunglasses, even though the summer had been far from bright. It had been cool and damp. The water in the river was yellow with the rains.

"Does your dad miss the Mom?" Audrey asked Tommy.

"Uh-huh."

"Who misses her the most?"

"I don't know," Tommy said. "Dad, I think."

"That's right," Audrey said. "That's what true love is. Wanting something that's missing."

She brought him presents. She gave him a big book about icebergs with colored pictures. He knew she had stolen it. They looked at the book together and Audrey read parts of it aloud.

"Icebergs were discovered by monks," Audrey said. "That's not exactly what it says here, but I'm trying to make it easier

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for you. Icebergs were discovered by monks who thought they were floating crystal castles." She pointed toward the river. "Squeeze your eyes up and look at the river. It looks like a cloud lying on the ground instead, see?"

He squeezed up his eyes. He could not see it.

"I like clouds," he said.

"Clouds aren't as pretty as they used to be," Audrey said. "That's a known fact."

Tommy looked back at the book. It was a big book, with nothing but pictures of icebergs, or so it seemed. How could she have stolen it? She turned the pages back and forth, not turning them in any order that he could see.

"Later explorers came and discovered the sea cow," she read. "The sea cows munched seaweed in the shallows of the Bering Strait. They were colossal and dim-witted, their skin was like the bark of ancient oaks. Discovered in 1741, they were extinct by 1768."

"I don't know what extinct is," Tommy said.

"In 1768, it was the eighteenth century. Then there was the nineteenth century and we are in the twentieth century. This is the century of destruction. The earth's been around for 4.6 billion years and it may take only fifty more years to kill it."

He thought for a while. "I'll be fifty-nine," he said. "You'll be sixty-five."

"We don't want to be around when the earth gets killed," Audrey said.

She went into the kitchen and helped herself to two Popsicles from the freezer. They ate them quickly, their lips and tongues turned red.

"Do you want me to give you a kiss?" Audrey said.

He opened his mouth.

"Look," she said. "You don't drool when you kiss and you don't spit either. How'd you learn such a thing?"

"I didn't," he said.

"Never mind," she said. "We don't ever have to kiss. We're the last generation."

Walter drank more than he had when the boys' mother was alive. Still, he made them supper every night when he came home from work. He set the table, poured the milk.

"Well, men," he would say, "here we are." He would begin to cry. "I'm sorry, men," he'd say.

The sun would be setting in a mottled

sky over the wet woods, and the light would linger in a smeared radiance for a while.

Tommy would scarcely be able to sleep at night, waiting for the morning to come and go so it would be the afternoon and he would be with Audrey, rocking in the metal chairs.

"The last generation has got certain responsibilities," Audrey said, "though you

"Look," she said.  
"You don't drool when you  
kiss and you don't  
spit either. How'd you  
learn such a thing?"  
"I didn't," he said. "Never  
mind," she said. "We  
don't ever have to kiss."

might think we wouldn't. We should know nothing and want nothing and be nothing, but at the same time we should want everything and know everything and be everything."

Upstairs in his room, Walter Jr. was lifting weights. They could hear him breathing, gasping.

Audrey's strange, smooth face looked blank. It looked empty.

"Did you love my brother?" Tommy asked. "Do you still love him?"

"Certainly not," Audrey said. "We were just passing friends."

"My father says we are all passing guests of God."

"He says that kind of thing because the Mom left so quick." She snapped her fingers.

Tommy was holding tight to the curved metal arms of the chair. He put his hands up to his face and sniffed them. He had had dreams of putting his hands in Audrey's hair, hiding them there, up to his wrists. Her hair was the color of gingerbread.

"Love isn't what you think anyway," Audrey said.

"I don't," Tommy said.

"Love is ruthless. I'm reading a book for English class, *Wuthering Heights*. Everything's in the book, but mostly it's about the ruthlessness of love."

"Tell me the whole book," Tommy said.

"Emily Brontë wrote *Wuthering Heights*. I'll tell you a story about her."

He picked at a scab on his knee.

"Emily Brontë had a bulldog named Keeper that she loved. His only bad habit was sleeping on the beds. The housekeeper complained about this and Emily said that if she ever found him sleeping on the clean white beds again, she would beat him. So Emily found him one evening sleeping on a clean white bed and she dragged him off and pushed him in a corner and beat him with her fists. She punished him until his eyes were swelled up and he was bloody and half blind, and after she punished him, she nursed him back to health."

Tommy rocked on his chair, watching Audrey. He stopped picking. The scab didn't want to come off.

"She had a harsh life," Audrey said, "but she was fair."

"Did she tell him later that she was sorry?" Tommy asked.

"No. Absolutely not."

"Did Keeper forgive her?"

"Dogs aren't human. They can't forgive."

"I've never had a dog," Tommy said.

"I had a dog when I was little. She was a golden retriever. She looked exactly like all golden retrievers. Her size was the same, the color of her fur, and her large, sad eyes. Her behavior was the same. She was devoted, expectant, and yet resigned. Do you see what I mean? But I liked her a lot. She was special to me. When she died, I wanted them to bury her under my window, but you know what they said to me? They said, 'The best place to bury a dog is in your heart.'"

She looked at him until he finally said, "That's right."

"That's a crock," she said. "A crock of you know what. Don't agree to so much stuff. You've got to watch out."

"All right," he said, and shook his head.

Sometimes Audrey visited him at school. He told her when his recess was and she would walk over to the playground and talk with him through the playground's chain link fence. Once she brought a girlfriend with her. Her name was Flan, and she wore large clothes, a long, wide skirt and a big sweater with little animals

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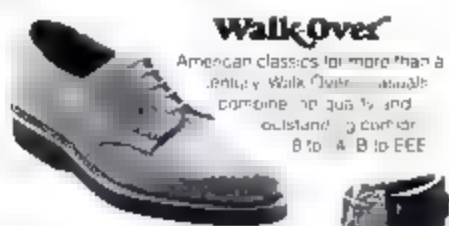


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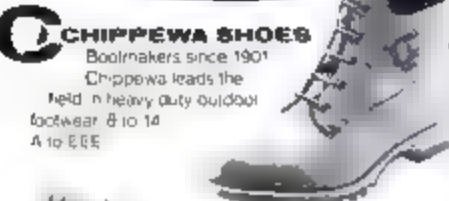
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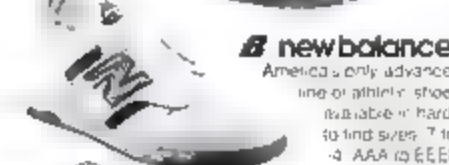
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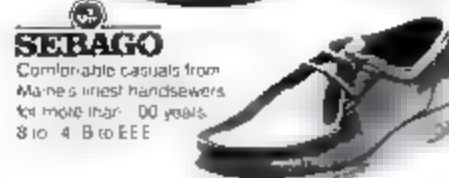
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running in rows. There were only parts of the little animals where the body of the sweater met the sleeves and collar.

"Isn't he cute," Flan said. "He's like a little doll, isn't he?"

"Now don't go and scare him," Audrey said.

Flan had a cold. She held little wadded tissues to her mouth and eyes. The tissues were blue and pink and green and she would dab at her face with them and push them back in her pockets, but one spilled out and fluttered in the weeds beside the school-yard fence. It would not blow away but stayed fluttering there.

"I ain't scaring him. Where'd you get all them moles around your neck?" she said to Tommy.

"What do you mean, where'd he get them," Audrey said. "He didn't get them from anywhere."

"Don't you worry about them moles?" the girl persisted.

"Now," Tommy said.

"You're a brave little guy, aren't you," Flan said. "There's other stuff, I know. I'm not saying it's all moles." She tugged at the front of the frightful sweater. "Audrey gave me this sweater. She stole it. You know how she steals things and after a while she puts them back? But I like this, so it's not going to get put back."

Tommy gazed at the sweater and then at Audrey.

"Sometimes putting stuff back is the best part," Audrey said. "Sometimes it isn't."

"Audrey can steal anything," Flan said. "Can she steal a house?" Tommy asked.

"He's so cute," Flan shrieked.

"I gotta go in," Tommy said. Behind him, in the school yard, the children were playing a peculiar game. Running, crouching, calling, there didn't seem to be any rules. He trotted toward them and heard Flan say, "He's a cute little guy, isn't he?"

Tommy never saw Flan again and he was glad of that. He asked Audrey if Flan was in the last generation.

"Yes," Audrey said. "She sure is."

"Is my brother in the last generation, too?"

"Technically he is, of course," Audrey said. "But he's not really. He has too much stuff."

"I have stuff," Tommy said. He had his little cars. "You've given me stuff."

"But you don't have possessions, because what I gave you I stole. Anyway, you'll stop caring about that soon. You'll forget all about it, but Walter Jr. really likes possessions and he likes to think about what he's going to do. He has his truck and his barbells and those shirts with the pearl buttons."

"He wants a pair of lizard boots for his

birthday," Tommy said.

"Isn't that pathetic," Audrey said.

Every night, Walter would come home from work, scrub down his hands and arms, set the table, pour the milk. The boys sat on either side of him. The chair where their mother used to sit looked out at the yard, at a woodpile there.

"Men," Walter began, "when I was your age, I didn't know..." He shook his head and drank his whiskey, his eyes filling with tears.

He had been forgetting to empty the bucket in the space above Tommy's room. A pale stain had spread upon the ceiling. Tommy showed it to Audrey.

"That's nice," she said, "the shape, all dappled brown and yellow like that, but it doesn't tell you anything really. It's just part of the doomed reality all around us." She climbed up and brought the bucket down.

"A monk would take this water and walk into the desert and pour it over a dry and broken stick there," she said. "That's why people become monks, because they get sick of being around doomed reality all the time."

"Let's be monks," he said.

"Monks love solitude," Audrey said. "They love solitude more than anything. When monks started out, long, long ago, they were waiting for the end of time."

"But the end of time didn't happen."

"It was too soon then. They didn't know what we know today."

She wore silver sandals. Once she had broken a strap on the sandal and Tommy had fixed it with his Hot Stuff Instant Glue.

"Someday we could have a little boy just like you," she said. "And we'd call him Tommy Two."

But he was not fond of this idea. He was afraid that it would come out of him somehow, this Tommy Two, that he would make it and be ashamed. So, together, they dismissed the notion.

One day Walter Jr. said to him, "Look, Audrey shouldn't be hanging around here all the time. She's weird. She's no mommy, believe me."

"I don't need a mommy," Tommy said.

"She's mad at me and she's trying to get back at me through you. She's just practicing on you. You don't want to be practiced on, do you? She's just a very unhappy person."

"I'm unhappy," Tommy said.

"You need to get out and play some games. Soccer, maybe."

"Why?" Tommy said. "I don't like Daddy."

"You're just trying that out," Walter Jr. said. "You like him well enough."

"Audrey and me are the last generation



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and you're not," Tommy said.

"What are you talking about?"

"You should be but you're not. Nothing can be done about it."

"Let's drive around in the truck," Walter Jr. said.

Tommy still enjoyed riding around in the truck. They passed by the houses their mother had cleaned. They looked all right. Someone else was cleaning them now.

"You don't look good," Walter Jr. said. "You're too pale. You mope around all the time."

Hard little leaves whirled across the road. Inside the truck, the needle of the black compass on the dashboard trembled. The compass box was filled with what seemed like water. Maybe it was water. Tommy was looking at everything carefully but trying not to think about it. Audrey was teaching him how to do this. He remembered at some point to turn toward his brother and smile, and this made his brother feel better, it was clear.

The winter nights were cool. Audrey and Tommy still sat in their chairs at dusk on the porch but now they wrapped themselves in blankets.

"Walter Jr. is dating a lot anymore," Audrey said. "It's nice we have these evenings to ourselves but we should take little trips, you know? I have a lot to show you. Have you ever been to the TV tower north of town?"

The father, Walter, was already in bed. He worked and drank and slept. He had saved the fragments of soap his wife had left behind in the shower. He had wrapped them in tissue paper and placed them in a drawer. But he was sleeping in the middle of the bed these nights, hardly aware of it.

"No," Tommy said. "Is it in the woods?"

"It's a lot taller than the woods and it's not far away from here. It's called Tall Timbers. It's right smack in the middle of birds' migration routes. Thousands of birds run into it every year, all kinds of them. We can go out there and look at the birds."

Tommy was puzzled. "Are the birds dead?"

"Yes," she said. "In an eleven-year period, 30,000 birds of 170 species have been found at the base of the tower."

"Why don't they move it?"

"They don't do things like that," Audrey said. "It would never occur to them."

He did not want to see the birds around the tower. "Let's go," he said.

"We'll go in the spring. That's when the birds change latitudes. That's when they move from one place to another. There's a little tiny warbler bird that used to live around here in the spring, but people haven't seen it for years. They haven't

found it at the base of any of the TV towers. They used to find it there, that's how they knew it wasn't extinct."

"Monks used to live on top of tall towers," Tommy said, for she had told him this. "If a monk stayed up there, he could keep the birds away, he could wave his arms around or something so they wouldn't hit."

"Monks live in a cool, crystalline half-darkness of the mind and heart," Audrey said. "They couldn't be bothered with that."

They rocked in their chairs on the porch. The porch had been painted a succession of colors. Where the chairs had scraped the wood there was light green, dark green, blue, red. Bugs crawled around the lights.

"If I got sick, would you stay with me?" Tommy asked.

"I'm not sure. It would depend."

"My mommy would have stayed."

"Well, you never know," Audrey said.

"You got to realize mommys get tired. They're willing to let things go sometimes. They get to thinking and they're off."

"Do you have a mommy?" he asked cautiously.

"Technically I do," Audrey said, "but she's gone as your mommy, actually. Before something's gone, it has to be there, right? Even so, I don't feel any rancor about her. It's important not to feel rancor."

"I don't feel rancor," Tommy said.

Then one afternoon, Walter came home from his work at the garage and it was as though he had woken from a strange sleep. It wasn't as though he appeared startled by awakening. His days and nights of grief came to an end with no harder shock than that of a boat's keel grounding upon a river's shore. He stopped drinking and weeping. He put his wife's things in cardboard boxes and stored the boxes. In fact, he stored them in the space above Tommy's room.

"Why's that girl here all the time?" Walter asked. "She's not still Walter Jr.'s girlfriend, is she?"

He said, "She shouldn't be here all the time."

"Audrey's my friend," Tommy said.

"She's not a nice girl. She's too old to be your friend."

"Then I'm too young to be your friend."

"No, honey, you're my son."

"I don't like you," Tommy said.

"You love me, but you don't like me, is that it?" Walter was thinner and cleaner. He spoke cheerfully.

Tommy considered this. He shook his head.

At school, at the edge of the playground, Audrey talked through the chain link fence to Tommy.

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"You know that pretty swamp close-by? It's full of fish, all different kinds. You know how they know?"

He didn't.

"They poison little patches of it. They put out nets and then they drop the poison in. It settles in the gills of the fish and suffocates them. The fish pop up to the surface and then they drag them out and classify and weigh and measure each one."

"Who?" Tommy said.

"They do it a couple times a year to see if there's as many different kinds and as many as before. That's how they count things. That's their attitude. They act as though they care about stuff, but they don't. They're just pretending."

Tommy told her that his father didn't want her to come over to the house, that he wasn't supposed to talk to her anymore.

"The Dad's back, is he?" Audrey said.

"He thinks he can start over. Pathetic."

"What are we going to do?" Tommy said.

"You shouldn't listen to him," Audrey said. "Why are you listening to him? We're the last generation, there's something else we're listening to."

They were silent for a while, listening. The other children had gone inside.

"What is it?" Tommy asked.

"You'll recognize it when you hear it. Something will happen, something unusual for which we were always prepared. The Dad's life has already taken a turn for the worse, it's obvious. It's like he's a stranger now, walking down the wrong road. Do you see what I mean? I could put it another way."

"Put it another way," he said.

"It's his life that's like the stranger, standing real still. A stranger standing alongside a dark road, waiting for him to pass."

It appeared his father was able to keep Audrey away. Tommy wouldn't have thought it was possible. He knew his father was powerless, but Audrey wasn't coming around. His father moved through the house in his dark, oiled boots, in his ragged, limping way. He was fixing things. He painted the kitchen, restacked the woodpile. He replaced the pipe above the ceiling in Tommy's room. It had long been accepted that this could not be done, but now it was done, it did not leak, there was no need for the bucket. The bucket was used now to take ashes from the wood stove. Walter Jr. had a job in the gym he worked out in. He had long, hard muscles, a distracted air. He worried about girls, about money. He wanted an apartment of his own, in town.

Tommy lived alone with his father.

"Talk to me, son," Walter said. "I love you."

Tommy said nothing. His father disgusted him a little. He was like a tree walking, strange but not believable. He was trying to start over. It was pathetic.

Tommy saw Audrey only on school days, at recess. He waited by the fence for her in the vitreous, intractable light of the southern afternoon.

"I had a boy tell me once my nipples were like bowls of Wheaties," Audrey said.

"When?" Tommy said. "No."

"That's a simile. Similes are a crock. There's no more time for similes. There used to be that kind of time, but no more. You shouldn't see what you're seeing, thinking it looks like something else. They haven't left us with much, but the things that are left should be seen as they are."

Some days she did not come by. Then he would see her waiting at the fence, or she would appear suddenly, while he was waiting there. But then days passed, more days than there had been before. Days with Walter saying,

"We need each other, son. We're not over this yet. We have to help each other. I need your help."

It was suppertime. They were sitting over the last of a meal Walter had fixed.

"I want Audrey back," Tommy said.

"Audrey?" Walter looked surprised.

"Walter Jr. heard about what happened to Audrey. She made her bed, as they say, now she's got to lie in it." He looked at Tommy, then startled, looked away.

"Who wants you?" Tommy said. "Nobody."

Walter rubbed his head with his hands. He looked around the room, at some milk on the floor that Tommy had spilled. The house was empty except for them. There were no animals around, nothing. It was all beyond what was possible, he knew.

In the night, Tommy heard his father moving around, bumping into things, moaning. A glass fell. He heard it breaking for what seemed a long time. The air in the house felt close, sour. He pushed open his bedroom window and felt the air fluttering warmly against his skin. Down along the river, the water popped and smacked against the muddy bank. It was close to the season when he and Audrey could go to the tower where all the birds were. He could feel it in the air. Audrey would come for him from wherever she was, from wherever they had made her go, and they would go to the tower and find the little warbler bird. Then they would know that it still existed because they had found it dead there. He and Audrey would be the ones who would find it. They were the last generation, the ones who would see everything for the last time. That's what the last generation does. ■

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On page 169: Nautica **sweater** (\$80) at Nautica, New York and Costa Mesa, California; Strawbridge & Clothier, Philadelphia; Filene's, Boston. For information contact: Nautica, 10 West Thirty-third Street, New York, New York 10001. Oliver Peoples

**sunglasses** (\$180) at Morgenthal-Feederics Opticians, 685 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10021.

On page 170: Crossings **turtleneck** (\$56) at Bloomingdale's, New York; Thomas Miller, Woodbury, New York; Oxford Baggs, Avon, Connecticut; Lazarus, Cincinnati; Nordstrom, Seattle; Macy's, San Francisco. For information contact: Crossings, 1290 Sixth Avenue, Suite 1542, New York, New York 10104. Ruff Hewn **trousers** (\$66) at Hudson's, New York; Woodward & Lothrop, Washington, D.C.; Matthews Belk, Gastonia, North Carolina; Mark Shale, Chicago; Nordstrom, throughout the West Coast. For information call 1-800-334-8716. Henry Cotton's **belt** (\$50) at Macy's, New York; Dimension, Philadelphia; W.D. & Company, Boston; La Vie en Rose, Palm Desert, California; Button Down, San Francisco. For information contact: Henry Cotton's, 681 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10022.

On page 171: Polo by Ralph Lauren **sport jacket** (\$450) at Polo/Ralph Lauren, Beverly Hills; Macy's, San Francisco. Polo by Ralph Lauren **shirt** (\$72.50) at Polo/Ralph Lauren, New York, Stamford, Connecticut, and Honolulu. Polo by Ralph Lauren **trousers** (\$87.50) at Barneys New York; Polo/Ralph Lauren, San Antonio and Aspen. For information contact: Polo/Ralph Lauren, 40 West Fifty-fifth Street, New York, New York 10019. Polo/Ralph Lauren **leathergoods belt** (\$490) at Polo/Ralph Lauren, New York. For information contact: Polo/Ralph Lauren Leathergoods, 39 West Fifty-fifth Street, New York, New York 10019.

On page 172: Basco **jacket** (\$160) at Barneys New York and Charivari, New York; Marshall Field's, Chicago; Bullock's and Fred Segal, Los Angeles. For information contact: Basco, 58 West Fortieth Street, Tenth Floor, New York, New York 10018. British Khaki **sweater** (\$100) at Bonwit Teller, Boston; Beecroft & Bull Ltd., Norfolk, Virginia; New England Trading Co., Palm Desert, California. British Khaki **shirt** (\$110) at Macy's, New York; Nordstrom, Tyson's Corner, Virginia; W. A. King, Santa Barbara, California; Hemisphere, San Francisco. For information contact: British Khaki, 214 West Thirty-ninth Street, New York, New York 10018.

On page 173: Hugo Boss **sport jacket** (\$1,100) at Clappers, Riverside Square Mall, New Jersey; The Hugo Boss Shop, Washington,

D.C.; Adam Ross, Cleveland. For information contact: Hugo Boss, 49 West Fifty-seventh Street, New York, New York 10019. Bill Robinson **shirt** (\$90) at Charivari and Macy's, New York; Marshall Field's, Chicago; Neiman Marcus, Dallas; Bullock's and I. Magnin, Los Angeles. For information contact: Bill Robinson, 575 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10017. Coach **belt** (\$43) at The Coach Store, New York, Chicago, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, and San Francisco. For information contact: Coach Leatherware, 516 West Thirty-fourth Street, New York, New York 10001.

On page 174: Polo by Ralph Lauren **jacket** (\$595) at Polo/Ralph Lauren, New York and Phoenix; Nordstrom, throughout the West Coast. Polo by Ralph Lauren **shirt** (\$72.50) at Polo/Ralph Lauren, New York, Stamford, Connecticut, and Honolulu.

On page 175: Bill Robinson **jacket** (\$270), **polo** (\$55), and **trousers** (\$140) at Saks Fifth Avenue, Macy's, and Bloomingdale's, New York; Jordan Marsh, Boston. For information contact: Bill Robinson, 575 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10017. G.H. Bass **bucks** (\$65) at Macy's nationwide; Marshall Field's nationwide; Rich's, Atlanta; Dayton-Hudson, Minneapolis. Or call 1-800-950-BASS.

On page 177: Hugo Boss wool-and-silk six-button double-breasted **suit** (\$1,100), cotton tattersall dress **shirt** (\$85), and silk **tie** (\$55) at The Hugo Boss Shop, Washington, D.C.; Saks Fifth Avenue, New York; Clapper's, Philadelphia; Bigsby & Kruthers, Chicago; Neuman Marcus, Dallas. For information contact: Hugo Boss, 49 West Fifty-seventh Street, New York, New York 10019.

**Additional Credits**  
**Classics, page 46:** Knickers • Courtesy of L.L. Bean; Shirt, vest, socks, and shoes • Courtesy of Polo by Ralph Lauren. **Women Wu Lova, pages 142-143:** Stylist • Kate Orne; Hair • Bob Recine at Pam Reid; Makeup • Cyndie Joseph at Dan Brennan; Top • Courtesy of Vox; Skirt • Courtesy of Fuzzi at Kashiya; Shoes • Courtesy of Diego Della Valle; Flowers • Preston Bailey. **The Adirondack Tradition, pages 166-175:** Women's stylist • Lisa Vaamonde; Makeup • Lynn Barron; Women's hair and men's grooming • Max Pinnell for Bumble & Bumble, NYC. **Esquire Recommendations, page 177:** Grooming • Chany Catala for A La Mode, L.A.

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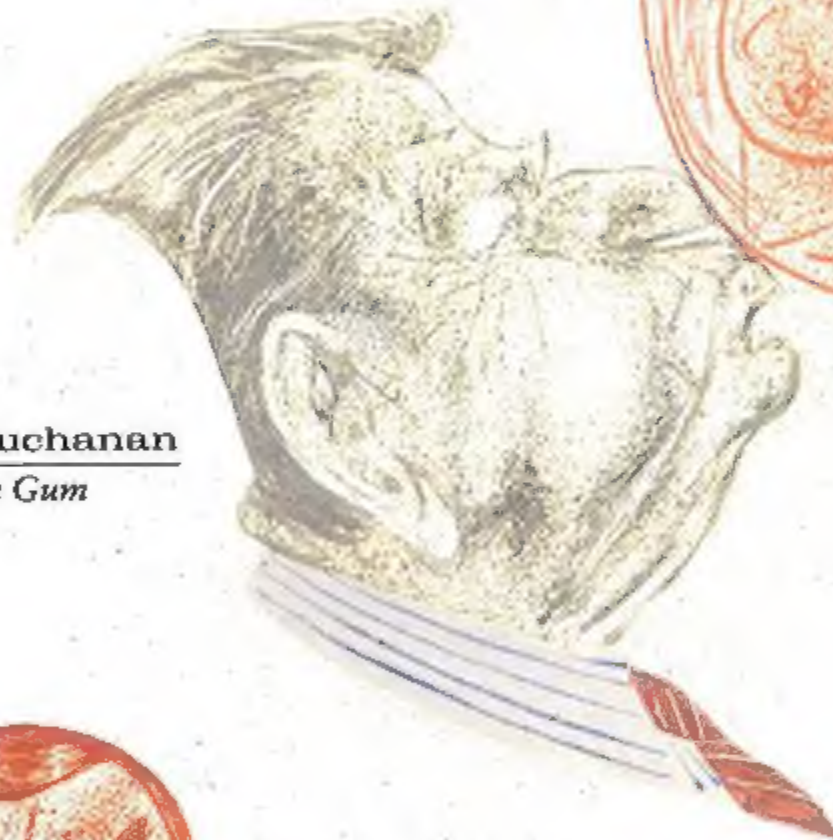
George Will  
*Doggie Treat*

## The Commentator as Junk Food

By Steve Brodner



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*Bubble Gum*



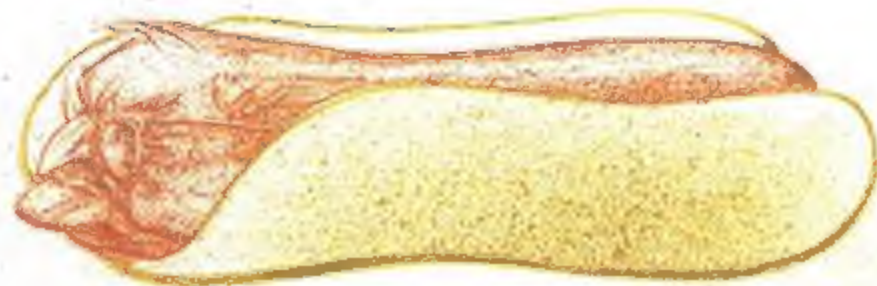
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# DEWAR'S PROFILE:

## DAN RIZZIE

HOME: Dallas, Texas.

AGE: 37.

PROFESSION: Artist.

HOBBY: Cooking and eating. "I go to Italy every summer but not for art's sake; I go for the food. I've got my priorities straight."

LAST BOOK READ: *The De-Definition of Art*, Harold Rosenberg.

LATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT: Four one-man shows in the past year. In New Orleans, Dallas, LA and New York.

WHY I DO WHAT I DO: "More than anything else because I can't imagine not doing it."

QUOTE: "If I keep pressing, I'll get a really strange art form that's all mine. Which will either be very interesting. Or unbearable. You tell me."

PROFILE: Witty and open-minded.

"Artistic types are supposed to live in New York, right? Wrong. Living in Dallas lets me do two things: Work. And leave the infighting to the experts."

HIS SCOTCH: Dewar's® "White Label" and water. "Cocktail hour is my favorite hour of the day. Really. You can look it up."

